DEMOCRACY AND EDUCATION: IS THIS MARRIAGE ON THE ROCKS?

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by Kimberly A. Ellis
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The problem. This dissertation investigated the relationship between democracy and education for the purpose of contributing to the on-going dialogue regarding those concepts. It attempted to illustrate the dynamics of that relationship based upon early and contemporary American interpretations.

Procedures. Through qualitative documentary analysis, this study examined the ways in which democracy and education were related through the eyes of historical authors—Thomas Jefferson, Horace Mann, John Dewey, Benjamin Barber—and contemporary educational policy documents—*A Nation at Risk, Goals 2000.* Comparisons were made first among the selected authors and then between the documents, followed by a comparison between the two bodies of data themselves.

Findings. The authors viewed the relationship between democracy and education as reciprocal, considering the concepts mutually supportive and essential to each other's actualization. They specifically saw education crucial in active citizenship, which included participation primarily in a democratic and secondarily in a vocational sense. In contrast, the documents focused on the relationship between democracy and education to a much lesser degree, stressing instead the relationship between education and economics; citizenship was more vocational in nature.

Conclusions. Democracy and education exhibit a dynamic, reciprocal relationship, but more than that. They both involve an intellectual process which requires judgments to justify the perpetual balancing of tensions between competing societal goods. Democracy and education also mutually support the preservation of American values since they, when taken together, potentially protect the existence of fundamental human rights. Finally, democracy and economics, both ever-present in America's enactment, demand education. The critical question raised by this analysis is whether the shift indicated in the policy documents from democracy to economics constitutes a difference in degree or a difference in kind.

Recommendations. Educational and political philosophers and policy makers should join forces to create a new social awareness of the choices we make. If we believe Jefferson, Mann, Dewey, and Barber, these choices link directly to the American way of life. The implication given the public attention to

the policy documents is that the democracy-education marriage is being guided, perhaps inadvertently, towards the rocks.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

American education has undergone numerous changes since its inception over two hundred years ago. The majority of these changes concern expanding the scope of education. Through time, this scope has been modified in three significant ways. First, those attending school in our nation have gone from only an occasional well-to-do boy, to compulsory education for every child from five to at least sixteen years of age. Second, the scope in educational content has expanded by moving from basic computation and Biblical literacy instruction to instruction in all major disciplines including liberal arts, vocational education, and life management. It is, however, the third major change that has provided the impetus behind the growth of the first two and is the focus of this document. That change is in the emphasis given to the various purposes of education.

The original core purpose of educating the populace from the forefathers' perspective was to create a citizenry capable of making informed decisions; this would ensure an enduring pursuit of liberty, equality, and justice in a democratic society (Butts, 1978; Doyle, 1989; Maxcy, 1995; Mursell, 1955; Alexander & Alexander, 1992; Brann, 1979; Bennett & LeCompte, 1990; Spring, 1994). However, Spring (1980) and Vaizey (1962) believe that education began to drift from this original intent in the very same year that the *US Constitution* was ratified. They say that Adam Smith, a Scotch economist and philosopher, professed a concern that the specialization of labor would reduce workers to thoughtless beings. He therefore suggested that education attempt to remedy

this situation by increasing the focus on competition and skills. Thus, students were viewed as potential workers—not necessarily as potential citizens—who needed to possess skills they could use in the world of work. With this idea he forever impacted the American perspective of education.

The environment of especially the late 1800s further aided in ensuring that the purpose of education would include some focus on industry. America's transition from a predominantly agrarian society to one depending heavily on industrialism meant that more and more people were required to fill positions in the workforce and needed greater skills once they got there. At the same time, a large number of immigrants poured into America from parts of Europe and Asia. They too brought with them a need for skills and employment opportunities; the American response was "to create a national unity out of the diverse population of the United States through an educational system deliberately geared to assimilation" (Glenn, 1987, pp. 33-34). Then in 1852 when Massachusetts initiated compulsory attendance, students flooded the schools, forcing educators to take a closer look at curriculum. As Cremin (1964) states, "compulsory schooling provided both the problem and the opportunity of the progressives; its very existence inexorably conditioned every attempt at educational innovation during the decades preceding World War I" (p. 128). Specific skills instruction and vocational education was one such innovation.

As a result of the previous century's change, educational reform reports began to reflect this modified purpose of education. In 1893 the National Education Association (NEA) established what they called a Committee of Ten. The committee produced a report that "recommended that secondary schools prepare students for life's work" (Ginsberg & Wimpelberg, 1988). In 1918, once

again a subcommittee of the NEA published a report, this time entitled *The Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education*. This report promoted the idea that education should prepare students for their role in a democracy, but it highlighted the belief that not all people have the same role (Spring, 1972). The report "aimed to address social changes such as the newly industrialized and complex economy" and "identified several means of preparing students for their duties as citizens, workers, and family members" (Ginsberg & Wimpelberg, 1988, p. 34). Thus, during the era from 1870 to the 1920s, Americans perceived that civic education accomplished three major goals: the maintenance of a powerful nation, the assimilation of immigrants, and the preparation of a workforce (Butts, 1980). Though these goals are housed under the term 'civic education,' they clearly bring to light a different set of beliefs about education's intent. They demonstrate that no longer did the perpetuation of our democracy sit alone atop the list of reasons for educating American youth.

Indeed it appears that Brann's (1979) words ring true: "Training for self-fulfillment through a calling, a *vocation* . . . is the learning most devotedly advocated of any in America" (p. 37). Herein lies the problem, as Giroux (1988) sees it, in that the result is that "the ideological shift at work in the current school reform movement points to a definition of schooling that is so restricted that it almost completely strips public education of a democratic vision in which the politics of possibility and citizenship are given serious consideration" (p. 18).

It is this shift in ideology away from democracy and toward marketability and vocational education that Giroux and others feel has greatly impacted what our graduates (and non-graduates) carry with them when they leave formal schooling. The argument of reformers is that democracy must be not only

taught but practiced in schools so that when students leave that institution, they understand the importance of such a concept. If education does not focus on democracy while students are still a captive audience, then how can we anticipate that these citizens will engage in democratic acts that define citizenship?

Purpose

This research aimed to contribute to the general dialogue on democracy and education that began centuries ago. I wished to uncover the content of that dialogue, explaining what others have said about the relationship of democracy and education including contemporary interpretations or evidence in government documents.

Those affected by the interpretation of this relationship include all citizens of this democratic society, especially the children in American schools. Those for whom this dissertation was written include the creators of today's policies governing educational practices since they play a major part in the development of the relationship between democracy and education. Furthermore, this was written for the implementors of those very same policies because they have a direct impact on how democracy plays out in our nation's schools. I hope to impact the way these two groups—policy creators and implementors—look at their roles as leaders and at their beliefs about democratic education.

Problem

The problem of this study was to discern what selected authors and government commissions have said or implied regarding the relationship between democracy and education since the inception of the United States.

Further, it was to determine whether the views of the selected authors and those of the commissions parallel one another and to discuss and draw conclusions and implications regarding the relationship between democracy and education. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What do selected authors make explicit, or is implicit, about their views of the relationship between democracy and education?
2. What do selected recent policy commissions make explicit or implicit about the relationship between democracy and education?
3. In what ways have views changed or remained the same over time regarding this relationship?

Need for the Study

> Schoolchildren in the late twentieth century in America are the heirs of nearly a century of historical pessimism. This pessimism has been reinforced by the past decade of debate about the deterioration of values, culture, and civility in America. . . A sense of decline, deterioration, and futility hangs over the American classroom. (Botstein, 1990, p. 74)

A plethora of late 20th century commentators seemed to agree that, indeed, our nation's citizens, young and old, did suffer from a sense of pessimism about society—intolerance, impatience, and a general discontentment with its institutions and individuals. In 1984, Hook had labeled this situation "our urgent contemporary crisis" (p. 20). It appears that little has been done even though, as Irwin (1985) states, "American educators know full well that the deepening divisions of race, class, gender and unequal economic opportunity, left

unresolved, can't help but spell disaster for our system of public schooling" (p. 2).

Just as Irwin believes that problems in society spell out problems for our schools, there is a more optimistic view which all of the authors chosen for this study shared, that schools provide hope, and even solutions for our future. But if they do not instill in students a heightened sense of toleration and community, then our current crisis will only continue to grow. In hopes of raising this issue in a systematic way, this study constituted a careful examination of the rationale behind public schooling for all. I wished to understand for what purpose it was created and why it is so important to our nation's well-being.

The arguments presented thus may implore educators and legislators to make a concerted effort at examining what we teach kids. It may cause curriculum writers to rethink about what we teach and encourage teachers to consider how they present material. It may also cause legislators to think about their beliefs and goals for education and somehow coax them into taking a closer look at the messages they convey in the documents they sponsor.

Philosophical Voices

Discussion on what constitutes a democracy and how it relates to education originated with the dialogue between men of ancient Greece. The Greeks contemplated matters of living in a civilization and/or community and possible variations of governing such a body. This led them to hypothesize about and experiment with the capacities of man including his ability to self-govern. For this to occur, Plato "believed that the political leaders, the philosopher-rulers, ought to have a liberal education" (Schweizer, 1989, p. 70).

> Plato argues that all humans have a soul composed of reason, spirit, and appetite, but he is careful to add that all humans do not have equal, rational, spirited, or appetitive capacities. . . . only a select few of individuals are capable of a liberal education and should receive such. Only this elite, the philosopher-rulers, will have the intellectual ability to gain a knowledge about the form of justice, of the education necessary to preserve the state, and of the knowledge of ruling which will allow the philosopher-rulers to order the everyday activities of the state. (Schweizer, 1989, p. 73)

Though he did argue that education allows men to make better decisions, much also depended on native ability. It would be safe to say that he saw a relationship between education and governance, but he was no democrat.

Aristotle also expressed an opinion regarding democracy and education. He too believed in educating for the purpose of preparing men to make wise decisions and aid in their own governance. His view of education was more expansive than Plato's.

> Aristotle's view of human nature permitted him to spread liberal education more widely than did Plato. . . . In Books VII and VIII of the *Politics*, Aristotle discusses the nature of the ideal state and the education necessary to sustain it. Contrary to Plato, . . . Aristotle argues that all those partaking in the politics of the state should be liberally educated. . . . Therefore, Aristotle's view of human nature extended the number of people who could be actively involved in politics, but it also

> broadened the base of those who could receive a liberal education. (Schweizer, 1989, 70-71)

With this expanded view, he influenced future consideration of education for more than those few who could vote. In Book VIII of *Politics* he says,

> And since the whole city has one end, it is manifest that education should be one and the same for all, and that it should be public, and not private—not as at present when every one looks after his own children separately, and gives them separate instruction of the sort which he thinks best; the training in things which are of common interest should be the same for all. Neither must we suppose that any one of the citizens belongs to himself, for they all belong to the state, and are each of them a part of the state, and the care of each part is inseparable from the care of the whole. In this particular as in some others the Lacedaemonians are to be praised, for they take the greatest pains about their children, and make education the business of the state. (p. 100)

Nearly two thousand years and an army of political philosophers later, the dialogue on democracy continued in the seventeenth century with John Locke. Locke focused on the issue of governance from the subjects' point of view. He says in *An Essay Concerning the True Original Extent and End of Civil Government*:

> To understand political power aright, and derive it from its original, we must consider what state all men are naturally in, and that is a state of perfect freedom to order their actions and dispose of their possessions and persons as they think fit, within the bounds of the law of nature, without asking leave, or depending upon the will of any other man. (Schweizer, 1989, p. 169)

Thus, Locke believed that people should control their own government for they had the God-given, natural right to do so. They should be the determiners of their own laws and change anything which they perceive as unjust.

In the century following, Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote *The Social Contract* which examined the same issues as had Locke. This book outlined matters of legislature, sovereignty, life and death, and the rights of those who live in the state. He says that, "Youth is not infancy. There is with nations as with men a period of youth, or shall I say, maturity, which it is proper they should attain before they are made subject to laws: but it is not always easy to know when a people are sufficiently matured" (1963, p. 237). Thus, people need to be *mature or well versed* (my emphasis) before they can take on the responsibility of citizenship. "According to Rousseau self-government is only possible if citizens can be made to grasp the 'general will'" (Gottfried, 1991, p. 67). For this reason, Rousseau insisted upon general education of the citizenry, an insistence that proved to be an important precursor to the place of education in America's democracy.

Evolving America

Less than a century later, people from different lands came together to establish a new society which had no use for a king and insisted upon devising rules of its own. The founders of this society took heed of the previously mentioned philosophers' words when creating this system. Some understood that education was essential for every child "because each would become a member of the public and thus require education for that role. It is therefore the public and not the private benefits of universal education which loom largest" (Ketcham, 1989, June, p. 3). Therefore,

> The framers of the American Constitution, along with the skepticism that gave rise to checks and balances, also believed that a dependence on the vigilance and judgment of the people had to be the 'primary' reliance for achieving good government in a republic. This fundamental ambivalence, this sensing of both good and bad in human nature, is still at the base of thinking about self-government, and affords all the foundation needed for serious attention to the public education of citizens. There is a potential capacity in human beings, that is, for in some degree rising above narrow and self-serving states of mind which can be nourished, educed, drawn forth in our public schools. If that's not true, then democracy is not likely in the long run to make a constructive contribution to human history. (Ketcham, 1989, June, p. 12)

Indeed, "Thomas Jefferson . . . was enough of a Lockean to paraphrase his philosophical hero in *The Declaration of Independence*; nevertheless, he

also insisted that Americans needed 'republican virtue,' the ability to submit to decisions of others—in short, democratic versions of the virtues of patience and practical wisdom" (Springsted, 1991, pp. 230-231).

> Jefferson opened up for Americans, and for many others around the world, the pregnant, beguiling questions of whether humans can make good use of the life of freedom, and whether self-government can result in good government. . . . He had the opportunity to ask the perennial question facing any democracy: can the people of any nation or community . . . be so educated, circumstanced, and experienced that they can govern themselves wisely, if given the opportunity? (Ketcham, 1989, p. 321)

Many answered with a resounding "yes," insisting that education and democracy were indeed related, and would not only *allow* people to govern themselves but to *better ensure* that people govern themselves wisely. Those are who have heavily influenced how we view democracy and education in the twentieth century. Thomas Jefferson, along with Horace Mann, father of the normal school establishment, educational philosopher John Dewey, and the late twentieth century historian and political scientist Benjamin Barber, exemplify men who have furthered this dialogue. We will consider each of these political-educational philosophers as well as contemporary political documents on education in the ensuing chapters.

Definitions

As Maxcy (1995) says, "The meanings of democracy are so varied that political regimes from the most authoritarian to the most anarchistic invoke the term in their self-descriptions" (p. 57). Beane and Apple (1995) also claim that "We hear the democracy defense used countless times everyday to justify almost anything people want to do" (p. 5). As if this were not enough, the literature also mentions many varieties of democracies. Muller, Seligson, and Turan (1987) speak of liberal democracy, saying that it is "freedom to oppose, guaranteed by the procedural political freedoms of speech, assembly, and organization, as well as the right to vote and run for office" (p. 23). Gottfried (1991) names global democracy as a "universal applicable truth. It is something that must be implemented at the expense of every state's sovereignty" (p. 71). Rimmerman (1991) defines participatory democracy as something that promotes: "(1) a sense of community identity; (2) education and the development of citizenship; (3) self-determination by those participating" (p. 492). Springsted (1991) adds, "If, for instance, we want a participatory democracy children ought to learn how to participate at an early age, and not have to take everything on authority" (p. 22) Finally, Goodman (1989) speaks of critical democracy in which ". . . schools are seen as forums for cultural politics that reflect, mediate, and potentially transform the societal order within which they exist" (p. 88).

This research relies on a very broad definition of democracy, simply defined as: the process of self-governance through knowledge and participation as reflected in institutional commitments. Education, a concept also worthy of numerous interpretations, was defined as: the inculcation of

community norms, mores, beliefs, etc. and the development of higher order thinking skills through formalized instruction.

Limitations

The first part of this study looked at the relationship between education and democracy through the works of a limited number of authors—four men from four distinctly different time periods. This relatively small number of contributors was chosen to raise the feasibility of completing such a focused survey of literature. However, one problem of generalizability in historical research occurs in "interpretation of historical evidence relating to a single individual. . . . (T)he historian may come across a document in which the individual being studied takes a stand on a particular educational issue of the time. It is difficult to generalize from this one document that the individual consistently held the same opinion across time" (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 829). Indeed, Cunningham (1994) would agree with such an argument for he says that "It is helpful, I think, to see this middle-period educational theory as a transition between Dewey's early idealism and his later naturalism" (p. 4).

Additionally, the gentlemen themselves offer a limited view of the discussion on democracy and should not be interpreted as to represent the mood or opinions of their fellow countrymen. In fact, if other authors had been chosen, the content and results of the study would be entirely different, and possibly contradictory, to those of this study. The perspective presented herein was further limited by the gender, culture, and social status that the authors similarly possess.

The second part of the study examined the same relationship between education and democracy as shown through two contemporary political

documents—one from the current decade and one from the previous decade. These two sources of information also provided a limited and possibly partisan perspective from each of their time periods. They may not have represented their decade's trends in education nor the attitude of the general populace. Additionally, they represented only two of our nation's long list of government documents assessing the system of education.

Chapter 2

METHODOLOGY

I decided that an ethereal concept such as the relationship between democracy and education would be best served by employing qualitative research methods. Qualitative methods allow the researcher to study essentially unquantifiable data in a systematic way.

Like quantitative research, qualitative research also has procedural rules to ensure credibility of findings (Rosengren, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). MacDonald, Newman, Waite, and Potts (1993) completed a study that specifically looked at the issues of internal and external validity and reliability associated with qualitative methodology. In their findings they stated, "Our research, we believe, supports the need to do further research on qualitative methodology for the purpose of improving appropriate interpretation of qualitative research" (p. 11). I therefore chose to further investigate the literature regarding these methods to guide my thinking and selection of procedures.

Miles and Huberman (1984) warned that "Empirical research is often a matter of lowering your aspirations. You begin by wanting to study all the facets of an important problem or a fascinating social phenomenon. But it soon becomes clear that choices must be made" (p. 36) Therefore, the first thing to come to grips with was the impossibility of reading and interpreting all democracy-related materials. Limitations had to be set. Texts selected for this study should thus form a representative body of literature.

Shroedel's study published in 1994 presented a good example of this. Shroedel wished to determine what impact the presidents of past have had on the legislative process. She concluded that, "The only reliable and comparable source of information about the legislative positions of different presidents is the published records of their papers, messages, and speeches" (p. 25). In examining these records she found that several thousand bills had been debated, and though only a portion of those had been passed into law, she still had too much information. She decided to limit her study by collecting data only on the banking bills which she then grouped into a case study format for the purpose of ease.

Sources: Authors

This example directly leads to the first decision made: sources of data. Since I wished to examine the relationship between democracy and education and how it has evolved over the years, I too decided to select sources of information that would provide a first hand account of its development. Similarly, I decided to limit my study by taking the writings of four authors that have contributed to the general dialogue regarding democracy and its relationship to education and have had a great impact on the educational system. Each author came from a distinctly different time period in American history and provided a unique perspective. The first three individuals chosen had a great impact on the formation of the educational system, while the fourth impacts it today.

The first author I chose was Thomas Jefferson because Jefferson wrote extensively regarding his desire for public education. Jones (1992) says,

> To read Jefferson's writing is to be put in touch with the multifaceted public culture of America's revolutionary and early national periods through one of the most diverse figures . . . . To the extent that the destiny of the United States is seen as the realization of the ideals of liberty, equality, and the pursuit of happiness, Jefferson gave words to that vision. (p. 6)

"More than any other, Jefferson's words redounded the public or common school philosophy that was to sweep the young nation in generations to come" (Alexander & Alexander, 1992, p. 20). Indeed he was a very progressive thinker from his time period. As Hook (1984) stated,

> Jefferson, as we know, was in advance of his time. He provided the rationale for the systems of public education that developed in the United States after his day, especially for instruction going beyond the fundamentals of literacy—reading, writing, and the arts of calculation. (p. 18)

He believed that "proper education was necessary to the birth and establishment of a free society" (p. 22).

I specifically chose Jefferson's "Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge" from 1778, which told ". . . Virginia what must be done if future generations were going to be able to maintain a republican frame of government" (Jones, 1992, p. 7). I also chose Jefferson's "Notes on the State of

Virginia" and several other letters written by him which provided his most explicit writing regarding the relationship between democracy and education.

Horace Mann, the second author I chose, also reinforced the connection between democracy and education in his writings. He,

> picked up Jefferson's argument in the 1840s when he pointed out to the people of Massachusetts that one of the highest and most valuable objects, to which the influence of a school can be made conducive, consists in training our children in self-government. (Ketcham, 1989, p. 327, paraphrasing Mann's Ninth and Twelfth Annual Reports)

Teeter (1986) refers to Mann as "perhaps the greatest of all the American school reformers. . . . Horace Mann, of course, was an anomaly" (p. 1). He raised money for and helped establish "normal" schools which formally trained teachers; he was dedicated to bringing upon the coeducation of students at Ohio's Antioch College because he truly believed in the capabilities of women; and he served for more than ten years as the first secretary of the Board of Education of Massachusetts. Rury and Harper (1986) stated that he was in fact ". . . a leading member of a generation of unrepentant reformers dedicated to social perfection. . . . He was easily the best-know educator of his age" (p. 482). I chose Mann's Ninth, Tenth, and Twelfth Annual Reports because throughout them he provided his opinion regarding education's impact on a democracy.

"Assuming as Jefferson and Horace Mann had that democracy required a properly-educated citizenry, Dewey" the third author chosen for the study,

". . . simply brought new pedagogical and psychological insights to bear on the nature of that education" (Ketcham, 1989, p. 328). "Dewey's basic assertion concerning democracy and education is familiar and Jeffersonian: democracy is impossible without education" (Boisvert, 1985, p. 348). "Like Mann, he believed in universal education as the best way of achieving a more democratic society. In stressing the close interrelationships between the school and society, Dewey, more than anyone else, conceived of educational purpose in truly social terms" (Rippa, 1980). John Dewey, ". . . helped lead the philosophical movement of pragmatism. Sometimes his philosophy is also called instrumentalism" (Smith & Smith, 1989, p. 2). He was,

> . . . an American philosopher-psychologist of international acclaim. . . . Dewey wrestled most explicitly with the question of development in children in his pedagogical writings. Education was Dewey's most enduring, comprehensive, and synthetic philosophical problem and the one for which he became best known. (Cahan, 1992, p. 205)

Boisvert (1985) stated that he was ". . . perhaps the last American philosopher to have so wide a public impact, and in mature control of the philosophic discipline" (p. 343). Boisvert then added that,

> During Dewey's lifetime Dewey became America's foremost philosopher. This was due to a variety of factors: a voluminous output, including articles in nonspecialist journals such as *The New Republic*; the articulation of a point of view that gave expression to American

> experience; and a concern with issues that bring philosophers out of their ivory towers: politics; ethics, education. (p. 344)

Dewey, as contrasted with Plato, was pragmatic in his views of the use of intelligence:

> The major difference between Dewey and a Greek thinker like Plato was that for Dewey intelligence had as its task not the apprehension of standards already set forth and given prior cognition, but the actual creation or construction of new goods or ends. (Boisvert, 1985, p. 348)

I specifically chose Dewey's *Democracy and Education*, "as much a work of social theory as it is of educational theory" (Cremin, 1978), because in it he explained his view of the purposes of education in our democratic society. Rippa (1980) believed that this work by Dewey "synthesized the varied aspects of Dewey's pedagogical theory" (p. 212).

In choosing these three gentlemen, I felt secure since this triad had been mentioned frequently in the literature. Ketcham (1989) focused on their ideas in his writing.

> It was central to Aristotle's argument that good government depended on the public virtue of those who ruled (all the citizens in a constitutional polity) and to the Renaissance 'civic republican' model requiring an independent, reasonable, and responsible citizenry. It was also central

> to Jefferson, Horace Mann, John Dewey, and other American proponents of democratic citizenship. (p. 322)

Rippa also said that others have referred to this group.

> In what Diane Ravitch has called The Troubled Crusade of American education in the generation or two after World War II, there has been both affirmation of the Jefferson-Mann-Dewey thesis about education in a democracy, and a curious, simultaneous inflation and dilution of that idea. (p. 324)

Last, I chose Benjamin Barber, the Walt Whitman Professor of Political Science and the Director of the Walt Whitman Center for the Culture and Politics of Democracy at Rutgers University, as the fourth and most recently published author because I wished to have a contemporary provide his view of democracy and education in our current American context. Barber, known for his ties with Jeffersonian democracy (Giroux, 1988), provided lengthy discussions regarding the importance of education to democracy in *An Aristocracy of Everyone.* This book plainly explained why education is so important in today's society and how our perceptions of its purpose greatly influence what kinds of citizens it produces.

Sources: Policy Documents

Examination of these four authors addressed the questions regarding the relationship between democracy and education, philosophically and over time. These perspectives, however guiding, were not directly produced by the bodies

controlling education on a nation-wide scale. To see how this same relationship was addressed by those who have a direct influence over this relationship's development in today's society, other sources were needed. I therefore chose two documents created by separate presidential commissions charged with studying and reporting on the status of the American education system. Both committees delineated their collective view of the purpose of education and provided subsequent suggestions for improving the system based upon this stance.

I first selected *A Nation at Risk*, completed in 1983, because of its impact on the way the public views the education system. Numerous other governmental documents had been published in the United States prior to 1983, but no other publication in recent decades had the impact that this one had. The commission that created this document caused shockwaves felt from the curriculum writers to the teachers and students themselves. This group redefined excellence as an increase in standardized test scores for the sake of national defense and the national economy (Greene, 1985). Of predominant concern in the document, was "the United States' ability to compete internationally in the areas of scientific research, technological achievement, and economic production" (Franzosa, 1988, p. 4). Thus, "the school's primary goal is seen as the production of competitive, independent, yet loyal, citizens who can contribute significantly to the maintenance of the nation's international supremacy" (p. 4).

It ridiculed high school curriculum and suggested that schools move back to the basics by increasing requirements in math, English, science, social studies, computer science, and foreign language (Bennett, 1992). Of special

interest and the main reason for including such a document in this study, was the fact that "the report is silent on the notion of education preparing intelligent and humane citizens for public life in a democracy" (Giarelli, 1988, p. 51). And, with its dissemination, education returned to the forefront of issues on American minds. As Doyle (1989) said, "*A Nation at Risk* solemnized reform sentiments. It made it acceptable to speak both in private and in public about the issues that had been concerning Americans about their schools for a very long time" (p. 116).

The second document I chose did not produce as great a stir as had the first, but it did show that once again a commission's report could focus and shape a nation's thoughts on education. *Goals 2000* picked up where *A Nation at Risk* left off in focusing on the fundamental problems with education in America. In the late 1980s,

> The general feeling was that some kind of national intervention was needed. Former President Bush spearheaded the movement by leading an education summit in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 1989 that resulted in a statement of national education goals. In 1990 the president proposed world-class content standards and a set of achievement tests in five core subjects. (Kirst & Guthrie, 1994, p. 159)

Commission members looked at the status of the American education system by way of accumulating statistics on the fifty individual states. Upon reviewing the findings therein, the commission then devised six goals (later changed to eight) for which the system is to strive by the year 2000. What makes this document so

intriguing is that it was begun by one commission formed under a Republican president but signed into law by the Democratic president that followed.

Data Gathering

With data sources chosen, data gathering and analysis became the focus. Because this data came directly from literature and political documents, I engaged in a particular branch of qualitative analysis—documentary analysis or historical research—defined by Borg and Gall (1989) as "the systematic search for facts relating to questions about the past, and the interpretation of these facts. By studying the past, the historian hopes to achieve a better understanding of present institutions, practices, and issues in education" (p. 806).

Rudestam and Newton (1992) referred to the interpretation of texts as hermeneutics and cited Hoshmand (1989) in saying that

> This is a bit different from the task of phenomenological inquiry. In hermeneutics the data are pregiven to the researcher, while in a standard phenomenological study the researcher helps to create the transcribed narrative that has usually been obtained by interviewing the participant-subject(s). (p. 35)

Patton (1990) says that, "The term hermeneutics refers to a Greek technique for interpreting legends, stories, and other texts" (p. 84). This philosophy developed by Dilthey and further discussed and modified by other German philosophers from this century shaped this mode of research. Though this form of research has gone from a way to interpret Biblical texts to a way of

interpreting secular texts, Packer (1985), Constas (1992), and others claimed that this same approach takes on a much broader meaning and can be used to examine all human action.

Howe and Eisenhart (1990) warned that in completing qualitative research and insuring its rigor, the researcher must establish specific, yet subjective standards directly appropriate to the study. They believed that the method of data collection should suitably allow for the addressing of the research questions, that the background assumptions should guide research questions and methods, that the study should serve some educational purpose, that the research is done in an ethical manner, and that data are confirmed by triangulation.

Once I limited the content for study, I then did what Rosengren (1981) refers to as content analysis. This approach "applies empirical and statistical methods to textual material. Content analysis particularly consists of a division of the text into units of meaning and a quantification of these units according to certain rules" (p. 34). In order to do so, I completed an initial reading of the chosen texts which provided general familiarity with the literature and buttressed my rationale for choosing that particular text. Halliday (1990) said that the hermeneutic circle is critical "in the sense that its adoption involves the constant questioning of one's own presuppositions and interpretations" (p. 107). Brann believed that "reading is always a hermeneutic business: the recovery of meaning, the reappropriation of reflection, the interpretation of speech" (p. 16).

During the second reading, I engaged in what Lincoln and Guba (1985) referred to as "unitizing," or the first step in data processing. They stated that each unit should have two characteristics:

> First, it should be heuristic, that is, aimed at some understanding or some action that the inquirer needs to have or to take. Unless it is heuristic it is useless, however intrinsically interesting. Second, it must be the smallest piece of information about something that can stand by itself, that is, it must be interpretable in the absence of any additional information other than a broad understanding of the context in which the inquiry is carried out. Such a unit may be a simple factual sentence, . . . It may be as much as a paragraph. (p. 345)

Therefore, due to the sheer volume of data, I used the paragraph summaries themselves as units of data. During the second reading, I made paragraph summaries and placed them individually on index cards.

The placement of the summaries on the cards facilitated accomplishing the second step in data processing: categorizing.

> The essential tasks of categorizing are to bring together into provisional categories those cards that apparently relate to the same content; to devise rules that describe category properties and that can, ultimately, be used to justify the inclusion of each card that remains assigned to the category as well as to provide a basis for later tests of replicability; and to render the category set internally consistent. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 347)

Lincoln and Guba (1985) believed that making the category properties explicit

> not only facilitates the task of rule definition but also enables the investigator to begin on the task of category integration. Relationships become more evident and the category set becomes more coherent—more than a mere taxonomy within which to classify data. It begins to take on the attributes of an explanatory theory. (p. 342)

From the paragraph summaries emerged themes. These themes required the use of what Glaser and Strauss (1967) called the constant comparative method. The steps to accomplish this included: "(1) comparing incidents applicable to each category, (2) integrating categories and their properties, (3) delimiting the theory, and (4) writing the theory" (p. 105). With these steps, Glaser and Strauss showed that theory can develop from categories created from card groupings. It is from this data that I then drew conclusions about the relationship between democracy and education.

Data Analysis

After the data had been gathered from each of the authors and from each of the governmental documents, these were compared to one another. First, the major themes that emerged from the works of Jefferson, Mann, Dewey, and Barber were reviewed so that any similarities and/or differences in content could have been noted. Next, the two governmental documents were reviewed to also note similarities and differences in themes across the content. Once this process was completed, the two different sets of data were surveyed for their

similarities and differences to allow for the drawing of conclusions and implications for American schooling.

Chapter 3

FINDINGS: JEFFERSON, MANN, DEWEY, BARBER

This chapter contains descriptive findings from the works of four distinctly different authors spanning over 200 years of American history. The descriptions of the first two authors—Thomas Jefferson and Horace Mann— are considerably shorter than those regarding the latter two since they are drawn from significant, but relatively brief historical documents. The second two authors—John Dewey and Benjamin Barber—wrote entire texts on the topic of democracy and education, and therefore require more lengthy statements of findings.

Thomas Jefferson

In a letter to Joseph C. Cabell written on January 14, 1818, Thomas Jefferson summed up his attitude on education:

> A system of general instruction, which shall reach every description of our citizens from the richest to the poorest, as it was the earliest, so will it be the latest of all the public concerns in which I shall permit myself to take an interest.

Earlier in his life he had written and sponsored *A Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge* which built upon this desire for establishing a system of education:

> Whereas it appeareth that however certain forms of government are better calculated than others to protect individuals in the free exercise of their natural rights, and are at the same time themselves better guarded against degeneracy, yet experience hath shewn, that even under the best forms, those entrusted with power, have, in time, and by slow operations, perverted it into tyranny; and it is believed that the most effectual means of preventing this would be, to illuminate, as far as practicable, the minds of the people at large, and more especially to give them knowledge of those facts, which history exhibiteth, that, possessed thereby of the experience of other ages and countries, they may be enabled to know ambition under all its shapes, and prompt to exert their natural powers to defeat its purposes. (p. 365)

Jefferson believed that individuals' natural rights, such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, absolutely depend upon social organizations. In turn, those same organizations depend upon the individuals they serve; the relationship is reciprocal. Therefore, educating people in a democracy not only allows those individual rights to exist, it protects the rights of the collective. Education concurrently acts as a guardian of individual liberty and an enabler of democracy.

Education as a Guardian of Liberty

One of Jefferson's greatest fears regarding the creation of government developed around the late 1700s before and during his term as vice president,

and later president, of the United States. He expressed concern about the possibility of the newly established presidential position bastardizing into something of a monarch, a concern that even some of the best governments have evolved into tyranny.

> In every government on earth is some traces of human weakness, some germ of corruption and degeneracy, which cunning will discover, and wickedness insensibility open, cultivate and improve. Every government degenerates when trusted to the rulers of the people alone. (Query XIV from *Notes on the State of Virginia*)

To avoid entrusting leadership to the rulers alone, Jefferson suggested education, for,

> It would seem impossible that an intelligent people, with the faculty of reading and right of thinking, should continue much longer to slumber under the pupilage of an interested aristocracy of priests and lawyers, persuading them to distrust themselves, and to let them think for them. (Letter to Thomas Seymour, February 11, 1807)

The ability to read would lead citizens to think for themselves since it would place at their fingertips a plethora of public information. The government's responsibility should therefore be to not only provide people with reading

instruction, but with "full information of their affairs thro' the channel of the public papers, and to contrive that those papers should penetrate the whole mass of the people" (Letter to Edward Carrington, January 16, 1787). He encouraged the wide publication and dissemination of newspapers and other public documents even though he too became subject to their attack. But to Jefferson, this was by far not the worst of possible consequences. If instead, Americans

> become inattentive to the public affairs, you and I, and Congress, and Assemblies, judges and governors shall all become wolves. It seems to be the law of our general nature, in spite of individual exceptions; and experience declares that man is the only animal which devours his own kind, for I can apply no milder term to the governments of Europe, and the general prey of the rich on the poor (Letter to Edward Carrington, January 16, 1787).

Jefferson truly believed that ensuring liberty rested upon the shoulders of the citizens. He stated in a letter to George Wythe,

> Let our countrymen know that the people alone can protect us against these evils and that the tax which will be paid for this purpose is not more than the thousandth part of what will be paid to kings, priests and nobles who will rise up among us if we leave the people in ignorance. (August 13, 1786)

And Jefferson desired to expand the term "citizen" to mean more individuals than had previously been considered by society. He wrote

> It has been thought that corruption is restrained by confining the right of suffrage to a few of the wealthier of people: but it would be more effectually restrained by an extension of that right to such numbers as would bid defiance to the means of corruption (Query XIV from *Notes on the State of Virginia*)

He was sure that

> The influence over government must be shared among all the people. If every individual which composes their mass participates of the ultimate authority, the government will be safe, because the corrupting the whole mass will exceed any private resources of wealth; and public ones cannot be provided but by levies on the people. . . . The people themselves then are its only safe depositories. And to render them safe their minds must be improved to a certain degree. This is not all that is necessary, though it be essentially necessary (Query XIV from *Notes on the State of Virginia*).

Improving the citizen's mind would not only better guarantee freedom and ethical actions, it would enable the citizens to act en masse on any measure.

They would be provided more of a voice and opportunity to demand for their desires:

> A general call of ward meetings by their wardens on the same day through the State, would at any time produce the genuine sense of the people on any required point, and would enable the state to act in mass as your people have so often done, and with so much effect by their town meetings. (Letter to John Adams, October 28, 1813)

In addition to protecting society from governmental tyranny, Jefferson saw that education prevented states from losing their autonomy, pride, and from falling under the control of one another; it prevented the citizens from losing their liberties by default. To Joseph C. Cabell, Jefferson related a concern for his home state of Virginia: "To that condition it is fast sinking. We shall be in the hands of the other states, what our indigenous predecessors were when invaded by the science and arts of Europe" (November 28, 1820). Later in the same letter he wrote:

> The mass of education in Virginia, before the Revolution, placed her with the foremost of her sister colonies. What is her education now? Where is it? . . . The little we import, like beggars, from other States; or import their beggars to bestow on us their miserable crumbs. And what is wanting to

> restore us to our station among our confederates? Not more money from the people.

He acknowledged that money would not raise Virginians' stature and ensure their liberty. Education was required to not only safeguard liberty but the basis of pride in their own state. Jefferson endorsed this point by comparing Virginia's education to that of New York:

> Surely Governor Clinton's display of the gigantic efforts of New York towards the education of her citizens, will stimulate the pride as well the patriotism of our legislature, to look to the reputation and safety of their own country, to rescue it from the degradation of becoming the Barbary of the Union.

But almost six years later when Jefferson wrote Cabell again regarding the status of the University of Virginia, he acknowledged that his sense of urgency about education in his home state had not been heeded as he had wished. He wrote,

> I have been long sensible that while I was endeavoring to render to our country the greatest of all services, that regenerating the public education, and placing our rising genern on the level of our sister states (which they have proudly held heretofore) I was discharging the odious

> function of a Physician pouring medicine down the throat of a patient, insensible of needing it. (February 7, 1826)

Much to Jefferson's dismay, it would take several more years before education would become a state-wide concern of Virginians.

Jefferson also knew that educating, and subsequently placing intellectually astute individuals into public positions, would enable the remainder of the citizens to become beneficiaries of liberty, for "of the views of this law none is more important, none more legitimate, than that of rendering the people the safe as they are the ultimate guardians of their own liberty" [sic] (Query XIV from *Notes on the State of Virginia*). He trusted the common, but educated, man to make communal decisions. He reiterated his stance in a letter written to James Madison, saying, "Above all things I hope the education of the common people will be attended to; convinced that on their good sense we may rely with the most security for the preservation of a due degree of liberty" (December 20, 1787). In a letter to Edward Carrington written on January 16, 1787, Jefferson wrote, "I am persuaded myself that the good sense of the people will always be found to be the best army." This troop of informed citizens, yet still common men, would better protect the natural rights entrusted them and would hopefully ensure for this more educated populace a more knowledgeable government. To Jefferson, if everyone addressed community needs with sensibility, then liberty would follow; for though we cannot ensure liberty, we can ensure the education that may lead to it. In that way, "If then we

fail in doing all the good we wish, we will do at least all we can. This is the law of duty in every society of free agents, where everyone has equal right to judge for himself" (Letter to George Ticknor, November 25, 1817). But here too Jefferson remained disappointed since his desire for public education had yet to be heeded:

> My hopes however are kept in check by the ordinary character of our state legislatures, the members of which do not generally possess information enough to perceive the important truths that knolege is power, that knolege is safety, and that knolege is happiness. [sic] (Letter to George Ticknor, November 25, 1817)

Jefferson was simply very concerned that without education, there would be no democracy; ignorance is not bliss but its opposite. He wrote in Query XIV from *Notes on the State of Virginia* that children should be sent to school because, "If this period be suffered to pass in idleness, the mind becomes lethargic and impotent, as would the body it inhabits if unexercised during the same time." Therefore in a letter to Chancellor George Wythe, Jefferson implores Wythe to "Preach, my dear Sir, a crusade against ignorance and establish and improve the law for educating the common people" (August 13, 1786). He told Wythe that he believed the creation of an encyclopedia would also ". . . produce considerable good even in these countries where ignorance, superstition, poverty and oppression of body and mind in every form, are so

firmly settled on the mass of the people, that their redemption from them can never be hoped."

But beyond eliminating ignorance, Jefferson wanted to stress the value of knowledge. He said, "To know the worth of this, one must see the want of it here. I think by far the most important but in our whole code is that for the diffusion of knowledge among the people" (Letter to George Wythe, August 13, 1786). This knowledge would lead mankind to find truth: "The general spread of the light of science has already laid open to every view the palpable truth, that the mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favored few booted and spurred, ready to ride them legitimately, by the grace of God." He therefore created along with the public education system in his home state the University of Virginia because, not only would it bring in money, it would ". . . add to our circuln as well as to the diffusion of science among our citizens" [sic] (Letter to William Branch Giles, June 9, 1823). In a letter to Roger C. Weightman written regarding the nation's celebration of 50 years of independence, Jefferson said,

> May it be to the world, what I believe it will be, (to some parts sooner, to others later, but finally to all,) the signal of arousing men to burst the chains under which monkish ignorance and superstitions had persuaded them to bind themselves, and to assume the blessings and security of self-government. That form which we have substituted, restores the free

right to the unbounded exercise of reason and freedom of opinion (June, 24, 1826).

Even "If all the sovereigns of Europe were to set themselves to work to emancipate the minds of their subjects from their present ignorance and prejudice, and that zealously as they now endeavor the contrary, a thousand years would not place them on that high ground on which our common people are now setting out," because in England, "Nobility, wealth, and pomp are the objects of their adoration. They are by no means the free-minded people we suppose them in America" (Letter to George Wythe, August 13, 1786).

Ultimately, Jefferson believed that liberty—and the pursuit of happiness—would follow once education became established: "No other sure foundation can be devised for the preservation of freedom, and happiness" (Letter to George Wythe, August 13, 1786). This firm belief had developed from being subject to European ways of government which consequently had failed to impress him. "It appears to me then that an American coming to Europe for education loses in his knowledge, in his morals, in his health, in his habits, and in his happiness" (Letter to John Banister, Jr., October 15, 1785). "If any body thinks that kings, nobles, or priests are good conservators of the public happiness, send them here. It is the best school in the universe to cure them of that folly" (Letter to George Wythe, August 13, 1786). And so stricken by the inequalities especially present in France and England at the time, Jefferson wrote, "I am convinced that those societies (as the Indians) which live without

government enjoy in their general mass an infinitely greater degree of happiness than those who live under European governments" (Letter to Edward Carrington, January 16, 1787).

In Query XIV from *Notes on the State of Virginia* Jefferson states, "The general objects of this law are to provide an education adapted to the years, to the capacity, and the condition of everyone, and directed to their freedom and happiness." If individual liberty and happiness, and a healthy social and economic community were to flourish in the then contemporary western context, he was clear that education would be crucial. Democracy in its deepest sense, without education, simply cannot be. Education is an essential enabler of self-government.

Education as an Enabler of Self-Government and a Sound Economy

Beyond guarding the liberty essential to components of this type of government, education enables democracy—government by the people and an economy that supports their endeavors. Jefferson expressed one of the enabling reasons for wanting to educate the public in a letter to John Adams, written October 28, 1813.

> I agree with you that there is a natural aristocracy among men. The grounds of this are virtue and talents. Formerly, bodily powers gave place among the aristoi. But since the invention of gunpowder has armed the weak as well as the strong with missile death, bodily strength,

> like beauty, good humor, politeness and other accomplishments, has become but an auxiliary ground of distinction.

Jefferson therefore believed that if the natural aristocracy could be located and developed through education, then "Worth and genius would thus have been sought out from every condition of life, and completely prepared by education for defeating the competition of wealth and birth for public trusts" (Letter to John Adams, October 28, 1813). The artificial aristocracy that Jefferson so distrusted would not maintain control if everyone were educated, a condition which would enable society to live up to its responsibility of democratic self-government.

> The natural aristocracy I consider as the most precious gift of nature, for the instruction, the trust, and government of society. And indeed, it would have been inconsistent in creation to have formed man for the social state, and not to have provided virtue and wisdom enough to manage the concerns of the society. (Letter to John Adams, October 28, 1813)

If man was decidedly a social animal, then man should be able to regulate his own affairs by making wise decisions. Therefore, he asked Adams, "May we not even say, that that form of government is the best, which provides the most effectually for a pure selection of these natural aristoi into the offices of government?"

Similarly, Jefferson believed that locating the natural aristocracy would not only impact government, but also society's advancement. He wrote in Query XIV from *Notes on the State of Virginia*, "By that part of our plan which prescribes the selection of the youths of genius from among the classes of the poor, we hope to avail the state of those talents which nature has sown as liberally among the poor as the rich, but which perish without use, if not sought for and cultivated." These individuals should personally advance because of their gifts; however, society should also benefit. People ". . . should employ their genius with necessary information to the useful arts, to inventions for saving labor and increasing our comforts, to nourishing our health, civil government, military science, etc. (Letter to Joseph C. Cabell, November 28, 1820). Beyond government, education could potentially make dissemination of information and decision making easier and more efficient in many facets of life. "The first stage of this education being the schools of the hundreds wherein the great mass of the people will receive their instruction, the principle foundations of future order will be laid here" (Query XIV from Notes on the State of Virginia).

Through reflection regarding the civilizations maintained by the Native Americans at the time of the writing of the Constitution, Jefferson outlined a third enabling reason for why individuals should desire public education. He wrote that in Native American communities, "public opinion is in the place of law, and restrains morals as powerfully as laws ever did any where" (Letter to Edward Carrington, January 16, 1787). He urged the new American nation to abide by a similar belief since, "The people are the only censors of their governors: and

even their errors will tend to keep these to the true principles of their institutions" (Letter to Edward Carrington, January 16, 1787). But the western culture differed from the native culture in that the former is more rationally organized, involves larger units of government and very complex social and economic institutions. Therefore, education was needed to raise "the mass of the people to the high ground of moral respectability necessary to their own safety, and to orderly government" (Letter to John Adams, October 28, 1813). We can learn from the natives the important lessons of living together and protection of their way of life, but we must also go beyond those lessons to adapt education, government, and the education that supports it, to the western way of life.

Jefferson saw education as a means of guarding and enabling. Education guards against the betrayal of individual freedoms; it guards against the overindulgence of one party at the expense of another; and it ensures as best it can the justice with which the government operates. Education concurrently enables citizens to develop their natural endowments, it creates an awareness of our (western) code of morality, and it enables the individual to become a productive member of society, a contributing member of the public happiness. The continuation of Jefferson's quote from *A Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge,* Section I, summarizes best by explaining the interrelated nature of the public interest and the individual:

> And whereas it is generally true that the people will be happiest whose laws are best, and are best administered, and that laws will be wisely formed, and honestly administered, in proportion as those who form and administer them are wise and honest; whence it becomes expedient for promoting the publick [sic] happiness that those persons, whom nature hath endowed with genius and virtue, should be rendered by liberal education worthy to receive, and able to guard the sacred deposit of the rights and liberties of their fellow citizens, and that they should be called to charge without regard to wealth, birth or other accidental condition or circumstance. (p. 365)

Horace Mann

Horace Mann was a tireless advocate for free public schools in Massachusetts. Schools were for him the guarantor of self-government,

> since the achievement of American Independence, the universal and ever-repeated argument in favor of Free Schools has been, that the general intelligence which they are capable of diffusing, and which can be imparted by no other human instrumentality, is indispensable to the continuance of a republican government. (*Tenth Annual Report,* p. 61)

Public education for Mann, was the best thing that government could do for humankind: "As an innovation upon all preexisting policy and usages, the

establishment of Free Schools was the boldest ever promulgated, since the commencement of the Christian era" (p. 59).

Education is the sine qua non of democracy, but the relationship is reciprocal as democracy recognizes the fundamental right of every individual to be educated. "If a child has any claim to bread to keep him from perishing, he has a far higher claim to knowledge to preserve him from error and its fearful retinue of calamities" (p. 75). Education is more than simply a governmental responsibility; it is a human right recognized and protected by government. He wrote,

> I believe in the existence of a great, immutable principle of natural law, or natural ethics, . . . which proves the *absolute right* of every human being that comes into the world to an education; and which, of course proves the correlative duty of every government to see that the means of that education are provided for all. (p. 63)

Mann insisted on the reciprocal relationship between the individual and his or her rights, on the one hand, and a democratic government's responsibility to recognize and develop those rights in return for citizenship on the other hand. If the government takes the initiative to ensure those rights and encourage its citizens to grow, then the rights bearers must take to heart their own responsibilities which they in turn may use to encourage the simultaneous advancement of the government.

Education as a Grantor of Rights

Horace Mann began his argument with what he regarded as a self-evident "natural state" point of view: children come into this world in need of nurturing and nutrition. A child, he said, cannot survive without assistance from others for any length of time. Considering the infant,

> His wants cannot be delayed until he himself can supply them. If the demands of his nature are ever to be answered, they must be answered years before he can make any personal provision for them, either by the performance of labor, or by any exploits of skill. (*Tenth Annual Report*, p. 74)

The self-evident nature of a child's need for nutrition and nurturing was the basis of his argument that the child also had other needs, perhaps not as evident but no less crucial to his or her well-being: "Better that the wants of the natural life should be disregarded, than that the higher interests of the character should be neglected" (p. 75). If these interests of character education are neglected, "They then, who knowingly withhold sustenance from a new-born child, and he dies, are guilty of infanticide. And, by the same reasoning, they who refuse to enlighten the intellect of the rising generation are guilty of degrading the human race!" (p. 75). Just as it would be barbarianism to permit future kings to grow up without knowledge of how to rule, it would be equally so to allow individuals to mature without education (*Twelfth Annual Report*, p. 93).

He translated those individual rights listed above into responsibilities that would demand the attention of all citizens:

> The will of God, as conspicuously manifested in the order of nature, and in the relations which he has established among men, places the *right* of every child that is born into the world to such a degree of education as will enable him, and, as far as possible, will predispose him, to perform all domestic, social, civil and moral duties, upon the same clear ground of natural law and equity. (*Tenth Annual Report*, p. 63)

The community and the individuals within would eventually demand and deserve the benefits of this labor. They should witness and engage in an increase in responsibilities which will eventually serve their benefit as well.

Beyond the individual right to an education, the community also has a right to have the child enlightened for the benefit of the collective government. No man lives within his own bubble. Each man's actions affect others: "He cannot deny that there are thousands around him on whom he acts, and who are continually reacting upon him" (p. 71). Far from seeing education a burden, the community should therefore insist upon educating those in the vicinity:

> In the midst of a populous community to which he is bound by innumerable ties, having had his own fortune and condition almost predetermined and foreordained by his predecessors, and being about

> to exert upon his successors as commanding an influence as has been exerted upon himself, the objector can no longer shrink into his individuality, and disclaim connection and relationship with the world. (p. 71)

Community, for Mann, was a broadly encompassing term, referring to virtually any relationship between an individual and others. "As 'the child is father to the man,' so may the training of the schoolroom expand into the institutions and fortunes of the state" for "it may be safely affirmed that the common school improved and energized, as it can easily be, may become the most effective and benignant of all the forces of civilization" (*Twelfth Annual Report*, p. 80). Thus, whatever the community, another human being or all of humanity, education is core to the relationship and therefore must be fostered. "(A)ny community, whether national or state, that ventures to organize a government, or to administer a government already organized, without making provision for the free education of all its children dares the certain vengeance of Heaven" (*Tenth Annual Report*, p. 76). With this lofty vision, Mann connects the classroom with individual and societal interests. "(T)he true business of the schoolroom connects itself, and becomes identical, with the great interests of society. The former is the infant, immature state of those interests; the latter, their developed, adult state" (*Twelfth Annual Report*, p. 80). Not only is the intellectual advancement of the child necessary for his or her own development, but it is critical to the community. The community supports the child so that the

child can support the community. The relationship is the very nature of the human condition.

It was an easy step from this philosophical groundwork to the practicalities of governance in the United States. Having established a republican democracy as the United States had done in the late 18th century meant that the new nation should educate its youth. "It may be an easy thing to make a Republic; but it is a very laborious thing to make Republicans; and woe to the republic that rests upon no better foundations than ignorance, selfishness, and passion" (*Twelfth Annual Report*, p. 92). Instead it must found itself upon intelligence since that is the foundation upon which everything else rests: "a republican government represents almost all interests, whether social, civil, or military, the necessity of a degree of intelligence adequate to the due administration of them all, is so self-evident, that a bare statement is the best argument" (p. 91). A republic must also found itself upon intelligence because intelligence is the one attribute that will sustain a governing body through the ages and maintain its focus.

> But if such a Republic be devoid of intelligence, it will only the more closely resemble an obscene giant who has waxed strong in his youth, and grown wanton in his strength; whose brain has been developed only in the region of the appetites and passions, and not in the organs of reason and conscience; and who, therefore, is boastful of his bulk alone,

> and glories in the weight of his heel and in the destruction of his arm. (p. 92)

"And hence it is, that the establishment of a republican government, without well-appointed and efficient means for the universal education of the people, is the most rash and fool-hardy experiment ever tried by man" (p. 91).

Education as a Teacher of Responsibilities

By now it is clear that for Mann, the time to address education, the time to begin preparing individuals for their future roles and responsibilities as citizens, is during the first years of life. "In order that men may be prepared for self-government, their apprenticeship must commence in childhood. . . ." since "(t)he great moral attribute of self-government cannot be born and matured in a day" (*Ninth Annual Report*, p. 195). Adults should pave the way for the child by subjecting him to "such a course of study and discipline, as will tend to prepare him, according to the political theory of the time and place, to assume the reins of authority at the appointed age" (*Twelfth Annual Report*, pp. 92-93). "That any one who is to participate in the government of a country when he becomes a man, should receive no instruction respecting the nature and functions of the government he is afterwards to administer, is a political solecism" (*Twelfth Annual* Report, p. 92). A republic's members must know of the "true nature and functions of the government under which they live" (*Twelfth Annual Report*, p. 92); "the fitting apprenticeship for self-government consists in being trained" (*Ninth Annual Report*, p. 196). "(I)s it not obvious," he asked, "that, in all cases,

the law by which he is to be bound should be made intelligible to him; and, as soon as his capacity will permit, that the reasons on which it is founded, should be made as intelligible as the law itself?" (*Ninth Annual Report*, p. 196).

Mann decided that "the minimum of this education can never be less than such is sufficient to qualify each citizen for the civil and social duties he will be called to discharge" (*Tenth Annual Report*, p. 63). Therefore, all individuals deserve an education that teaches them: bodily health; parental duties; civil functions as a witness, juror, and voter; and "finally, for the faithful and conscientious discharge of all those duties which devolve upon the inheritor of a portion of the sovereignty of this great republic" (*Tenth Annual Report*, p. 63). Training, according to Mann, included learning how to change by ballot the rules and laws they deem unjust; how to vindicate one's self by taking to courts all alleged wrongs; how to advance civilization by choosing representatives through election and appointment; and how the general system of government works by understanding the three branches of government and the Constitution of the United States (*Twelfth Annual Report*, p. 93). "Here, too, may those judicial powers be developed and invigorated, which will make legal principles so clear and convincing as to prevent appeals to force" (p. 79).

In a more general way, he felt, increasing the knowledge of the population would directly affect the wisdom of the electors since electors come from the populace and generally represent those by whom they are chosen. "In a republican government, legislators are a mirror reflecting the moral countenance of their constituents" (p. 91). A wise constituency would dispel an

unwise man from the ranks of government for "in the possession of this attribute of intelligence, elective legislators will never surpass their electors" (p. 91).

Therefore, speaking for the state of Massachusetts, Mann wrote, "The property of this Commonwealth is pledged for the education of all its youth, up to such a point as will save them from poverty and vice, and prepare them for the adequate performance of their social and civil duties" (*Tenth Annual Report*, p. 77). Citizens would be responsible for engaging in exercises of government which in turn serve to maintain their own rights.

Mann became very specific about what those responsibilities included so as to make clear what education needed to prepare children to do. "By means of early education, those embryos of talent may be quickened which will solve the difficult problems of political and economic law" (*Ninth Annual Report*, p. 79). And through early education "too, the genius may be kindled which will blaze forth in the Poets of Humanity" (p. 79), and

> should the clouds of war ever lower over our country, some hero may be found,—the nursling of our schools, and ready to become the leader of our armies,—that best of all heroes, who will secure the glories of a peace, unstrained by the magnificent murders of the battle-field. (p. 79)

The social and civic duties would therefore include giving back to society those talents which public funded education had found within the individual.

Educated children can eventually impact society in numerous ways. They can supply us with

> the Presidents and Professors of Colleges, and Superintendents of Public Instruction, all over the land; and send, not only into our sister states, but across the Atlantic, the men of practical science, to superintend the construction of the great works of art. (*Twelfth Annual Report*, p. 79)

Education is the means by which "the 'raw material' of human nature can be worked up into inventors and discoverers into skilled artisans and scientific farmers, into scholars and jurists, into the founders of benevolent institutions, and the great expounders of ethical and theological science" (p. 79).

To ensure that society gets the most out of the individuals it serves, it would behoove that society to educate fully the future citizens in their midst. For Mann, education went beyond only a right and beyond only preparation for self-government, but included as well a concern for a healthy economy. He knew that the amount of intelligence required for a job is commensurate to the amount of importance that accompanies or is required by it (*Ninth Annual Report,* p. 90). Education therefore matters to individuals. But even in more general terms, an educated people tend to be more industrious and productive (*Tenth Annual Report*, p. 61). Increased intelligence is associated with an increased standard of living and free schools were to answer the need for increased intelligence

since, according to Mann, general intelligence is brought about by general education (*Twelfth Annual Report*, p. 89). In plain terms, "Intelligence is a primary ingredient in the Wealth of Nations (*Tenth Annual Report*, p. 61), since "Knowledge and abundance sustain to each other the relation of cause and effect" (p. 61).

In Summary, Horace Mann understood that education was crucial to the development of the still-new republic. It stood in reciprocal relationship with society in general, government and the economy in particular. Education was a right, but demonstrated responsibilities as well at the individual, societal, and governmental levels. He was adamant that a republican form of democracy would necessarily require education at an early age. Citizens, he insisted, are not produced overnight: "He who has been a serf until the day before he is twenty-one years of age, cannot be an independent citizen the day after" (*Ninth Annual Report*, p. 195); nor are they produced by relocating to a new nation: "a foreign people, born and bred and dwarfed under the depotisms of the Old World, cannot be transformed into the full stature of American citizens, merely by a voyage across the Atlantic, or by subscribing the oath of naturalization" (p. 195). Citizens are instead produced by recognizing their indisputable rights to be free moral agents, but *educated* moral agents who have responsibilities for their fellow citizens. Reciprocally, democracies are supported by governments which simultaneously acknowledge rights *and* impose on their citizens obligations to return the fruits of a public education back to society. Republican democracy cannot function without education, and good education includes the

responsibilities of democracy. Education and democracy, democracy and education; separate but inseparable.

John Dewey

John Dewey underscored at the outset of his *Democracy and Education* the importance of a direct and purposeful connection between democracy and education. His discussion would "embody an endeavor to detect and state the ideas implied in a democratic society and to apply these ideas to the problems of the enterprise of education" (1944, iii). Indeed, Dewey believed that the demands of a democratic society bring to the schoolhouse door a set of beliefs, philosophies, and aims to which schools must adhere. However, the course, mode, and purpose of study is not always clear. Choices are subject to interpretations because reality may offer two values, both pursued but in conflict or tension, one with the other. The resulting dualism or antitheses set up Dewey's framework for considering how schools must proceed and how democracy actually works—when it is working well.

> Every such social condition must be formulated in a dualistic philosophy, if philosophy is to be a sincere account of experience. When it gets beyond dualism—as many philosophies do in form—it can only be by appeal to something higher than anything found in experience, by a flight to some transcendental realm. And in denying duality in name such theories restore it in fact, for they end in a division between things of this world as mere appearances and an inaccessible essence of reality. So

> far as these divisions persist and others are added to them, each leaves its mark upon the educational system, until the scheme of education, taken as a whole, is a deposit of various purposes and procedures. The outcome is that kind of check and balance of segregated factors and values. (p. 334)

Dewey sees the existence of these multiple dualities or antitheses as one of the great influences of how education plays out within a democracy; dualities impact the relationship between democracy and education. How these antithetical concepts relate to one another and to democratic education will serve as a guide with which to discuss the themes found in his book, *Democracy and Education.*

Learning through Thinking and Experiencing

The first dualistic or antithetical relationship concerns ways of knowing or learning. John Dewey reviewed theories of learning and noted that two major components, the thinking (rational) and the experiencing (empirical) aspects of learning, had continually competed for dominance in time's forever evolving epistemology.

The Greeks began the dialogue by considering the first of these two—rational thought—the precursor to the latter—experiential knowledge; Plato's belief that "Philosophers (rational beings) should be kings" reflects this notion. Biology and the evolution of man supported this theory by physically demonstrating that man's larger, more attuned brain allows for planning and

complex acts which other species' smaller brains cannot even attempt. As the only animal capable of reason, man aptly confirmed his dominance over all other living things. Conversely, knowledge gained through the senses and experience were connected with the more basic human functions and incidentally seen as inferior (p. 264). Therefore, intellectual learning through reasoning had built its case as the preeminent and superior mode of increasing knowledge.

Based on this perspective, thinking, reasoning, and philosophizing in this sense became the major method of learning. But even at this early point in western philosophy, there were differences in emphasis, as, say, between Plato and Aristotle, the latter of whom would likely tend to agree with Dewey, that thinking involved "the process of inquiry, or looking into things, of investigating" (p. 148).

As it turned out, however, nearly 2000 of the intervening years of philosophy belonged largely to Plato. Nevertheless, by the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the western epistemology had shifted perceptibly, an epistemology which allowed empiricism greater latitude. Philosophy had realized the power of experiential learning and empiricism to enlighten what we now regard as truth. More empirical conclusions were concrete and based upon physical representations and experimentation. Even the higher level disciplines which necessitate the use of great mental faculties had evolved out of the more basic ones; i.e. the laws of physics revealing themselves through the use of tools and simple machines. It was within this philosophical milieu

that Dewey came to understand thinking as logic *and* investigation, of development and learning as we go, as the way people arrive at conclusions and resolve problems (p. 331). Thinking in this dualistic sense teaches people to criticize and interpret results. It educates and prepares, enabling the learner to speculate and devise possible solutions to situations in advance. It creates dissonance, rethinking, modifications. Even conflicting philosophies themselves aid in furthering discussion and the development of more philosophical thought (p. 326).

As a social institution, Dewey believed that education should follow these natural contours of human thinking, making it useful to society, but taking care to not just increase students' capacity for empty (non-grounded) knowledge or for memorizing facts. Often, Dewey noted, that is exactly what happens though: the "Acquisition of a modicum of information in each branch of learning, . . . remains the principle by which the curriculum is formed" (p. 187). Sometimes schools forget that for knowledge to have import and an impact, it must somehow relate to the learner (p. 342) and his or her sense of reality. Not relating education in this way or not expanding knowledge to anything past simple recall is counterproductive: "Mere amassing of information apart from the direct interests of life makes mind wooden; elasticity disappears" (p.209). Dewey believed that the acquisition of knowledge in this perspective concerned only factual understanding and did not touch upon experiential or practical knowledge (p. 355). Therefore, information merely communicated and not experienced would not be internalized. He stressed that thinking or mental

contemplation alone does not ensure complete learning. More is required; he labeled it empirical or experiential learning.

Children themselves offer proof of the benefits of this empirical learning. As natural discoverers, they inadvertently carry on experimentation with the desire of attaining knowledge even if it is simply to satisfy their curiosity or to clear up confusion. When they are active and can play, children enjoy their environment so much more. Including play in the curriculum therefore allows the child to remain in her natural state while simultaneously increasing her intellectual and social development. Purposeful educational environments with labs, shops, gardens, and theatrics, provide students with this kind of experience (p. 161). They give them a feel for their studies and enrich their scope of experience (p. 233). Therefore, Dewey believed, experiential learning is purposeful to human development.

But just as rational learning dominated the epistemology for a time, so too did experiential learning. It also pushed to the periphery its counterpart. "Since the impressions made upon the mind by objects were generally termed sensations, empiricism thus became a doctrine of sensationalism—that is to say, a doctrine which identified knowledge with the reception and association of sensory impressions" (p. 268). Sensationalism placed heavy emphasis on information gained through the senses, thereby reducing the importance of cognition. It did not acknowledge or encourage the learner's natural progression from receiving concrete information through experience to later

forming abstractions through reflection. Focusing only on this part of the learning process kept the learner from gaining everything from the experience.

Keeping these two entities—cognition and empiricism—as separate processes extremely limits the potential for genuine, permanent learning to occur. Dewey claims that the intent of rational learning and the engagement of empirical learning instead must come together. "No experience having a meaning is possible without some element of thought" (p. 144) since the experience itself is not cognitive, but the learning from it is. He says that reflection added to experimentation leads to increased learning. It is reflection that gives us a chance to notice what we experienced and how we experienced it. "Nothing is more striking than the difference between an activity as merely physical and the wealth of meanings which the same activity may assume" (p. 207). Learners must uncover those meanings by combining contemplation with experimentation and educators must guide this process.

One example of a successful combination of the two is the scientific method. It consists of trying out ideas and changing them into knowledge; purposeful learning results (p. 338). It encourages experimentation and reflection. It links prior learning to something concrete. Dewey believed that experience becomes rational through experimentation, and that when we experiment, we use that situation to learn and change our knowledge (p. 271).

Therefore, schools must not only provide opportunities for mental contemplation, they should also allow for meaningful experimentation accompanied by time for processing and reflection. Students must collect

experiences in their mental scrapbooks giving thoughtful account to every event.

> It is the nature of an experience to have implications which go far beyond what is at first consciously noted in it. Bringing these connections or implications to consciousness enhances the meaning of the experience. Any experience, however trivial in its first appearance, is capable of assuming an indefinite richness of significance by extending its range of perceived connections. (p. 217)

Understanding the link between actions and their whys makes us not only intelligent, but they make us moral. As Dewey says, "Things as they enter into action furnish the educative conditions of daily life and direct the formation of mental and moral disposition" (p. 37). These are the same intellectual and moral underpinnings of democracy, itself a grand experiment in Dewey's mind, an experiment that demands habits of mind carefully cultivated in the nation's schools.

However, schools often fail to encourage this combined approach. They require students to use their senses without the understanding or connection of the purpose. Or schools provide postulates and theories but disallow the chance to test for validity. Frequently, it is one mode or the other. Dewey therefore emphatically states: "We have before us the need of overcoming this separation in education if society is to be truly democratic" (p. 289). Rational

and empirical learning must receive equal importance and use. It means the acquisition of knowledge in schools linked to activities and occupations (p. 344); the free interchange of ideas. "(A) democratic society must, in consistency with its ideal, allow for intellectual freedom and the play of diverse gifts and interests in its educational measures" (p. 305), because a growth of the mind necessitates freedom of thought and questioning.

> Particularly is it true that a society which not only changes but which has the ideal of such change as will improve it, will have different standards and methods of education from one which aims simply at the perpetuation of its own customs. (p. 81)

Thus, for Dewey, allowing the dualistic nature of thinking and experiencing to continually interact with one another will lead to fully engaged learners—and citizens. It will encourage students and citizens alike to experiment, ponder, and weigh options. Democracy, sometimes seen as virtually synonymous with learning, is rational, yet pragmatic, intellectualizing options but acting as a way of learning more about the options.

Systematic Standards and Contextual Instruction

The second dualistic relationship that Dewey unveiled focuses on the pedagogical question of how to provide instruction. Once again, two antagonistic concepts vie for coexistence: the need for broad systematic standards and the need for specific contextual instruction.

Dewey says that the rationale for providing systematic standards, or instruction on a grander scale, began with Germany. Its national concern for education as a political means led Germany to become the first nation to establish public compulsory education (p. 95). Therefore, "To form the citizen, not the 'man,' became the aim of education" (p. 93). "The movement for the democratic idea inevitably became a movement for publicly conducted and administered schools" (p. 93). Promoting democracy meant promoting education. So, "The state furnished not only the instrumentalities of public education but also its goal" (p. 94). Education became political and more overtly important to the establishment. "(T)hat systematic attention to education was the best means of recovering and maintaining their political integrity and power" (p. 94).

"Any education given by a group tends to socialize its members, but the quality and value of the socialization depends upon the habits and aims of the group" (p. 82). The aim of the American "group" was to provide "An education which should unify the disposition of the members of society [and] would do much to unify society itself" (p. 260). Unifying society meant creating systematic instruction which would result in the birth of a method for transmitting knowledge. More people could learn and systematic education allowed society to teach that vast amount of information it wanted its citizenry to possess (p. 8).

But because of its many purposes and unfathomable amount of content, schools became good places for non-natural learning. The expression of ideas became expressions of facts since the recipient of information did not discover

that information him- or herself (p. 159). The classroom became, to many, a hostile environment to those experiences which provided learning while allowing for an abundance of reading, writing, and regurgitation of information (p. 155). Dewey says that "a particular artificiality attaches to much of what is learned in schools" (p. 161); "Only in education . . . does knowledge mean primarily a store of information aloof from doing" (p. 185).

Dewey says that the worth of any social institution is its effect in enlarging and improving experience (p. 6), not of reducing it to mere acts and routines. But a reduction is exactly what systematic standards accomplished. It became a method of training through repeated exercise, ". . . exercise or practice of the faculties of the mind till they become thoroughly established habitudes" (p. 61). The problem arises: "Fixity of habit may mean that something has a fixed hold upon us, instead of our having a free hold upon things" (p. 48). "Habituation is thus our adjustment to an environment which at the time we are not concerned with modifying and which supplies a leverage to our active habits" (p. 47). Merely forming habits does not mean true learning has occurred nor does it mean that we care to impact that learning in any way.

Therefore, the institutionalizing of education did much to simultaneously advance and hinder learning. It increased the quantity of learning and the quantity of educated members, but reduced quality of knowledge. It created a more 'educated' citizenry, but not necessarily a more knowledgeable one. Aims instead "must be capable of translation into a method of cooperating with the

activities of those undergoing instruction" (p. 108). This method which does consider the learner central to the process is naturalistic or contextual learning.

Naturalistic learning may be said to have its germination with Aristotle but it did not receive attention until perhaps the seventeenth century. For many centuries society would not allow for consideration of the hows and whys of human existence; the learner's questioning was not acceptable. But with the dawn of the "scientific" era in western civilization it increasingly became evident that science, or nature, is the "organ of general social progress" (p. 230). It wasn't until scientific inquiry that we seriously engaged in discovering from nature why we should believe instead of simply believing on the basis of argument or spiritually received wisdom. Scientific theory allowed us to expand our directions and possibilities (p. 228). It took away much of what we used to believe impossible or never thought of in our wildest imagination and provided us numerous inventions that touch various aspects of our lives (p. 224). "Science, in short, signifies a realization of the logical implications of any knowledge" (p. 219); it is the perfecting of knowing (p. 219). It is testing of inquiries, is very systematic, and is organized (p. 190). Science eventually become a philosophy when it developed within us a general attitude about the world not just a notion of facts (p. 324). This attitude about the world is contextual and has even greater meaning for the learner and was taken to a new level of thought by Dewey.

Dewey noted here power of both systematic standards and contextual instruction in interaction. They were, in his thought, dualistic concepts never

systematically allowed to coincide in public education. Children attended classes en masse, and once there, had been treated as all the same and as mere receptacles of knowledge. Forgotten was that students' lives interact with nature outside of school walls as a matter of course. But when those very same individuals entered the school building they were asked to separate themselves from their natural surroundings (p. 286). The need for mass, systematic standards overshadowed the need for authentic, context-driven learning.

Dewey's response to education as he found it was to juxtapose a different view to the traditional view. He believed that society should not educate students "apart from the environment, but to provide an environment in which native powers will be put to better uses" (p. 118). To understand nature and themselves, we must teach students, he reasoned, about the function of education in life, and how it directly related to our existence. "Education in accord with nature was thought to be the first step in insuring this more social society" (p. 92) and "furnishes the goal and the method of instruction and discipline" (p. 91). We should "provide an environment which shall organize" the natural things given us. We should observe children's natural tendencies and provide an environment that supports those we want to keep (p. 116).

> To organize education so that natural active tendencies shall be fully enlisted in doing something, while seeing to it that the doing requires observation, the acquisition of information, and the use of a constructive

> imagination is what most needs to be done to improve social conditions. (p. 136)

"The criterion of the value of school education is the extent in which it creates a desire for continued growth and supplies means for making the desire effective in fact" (p. 52). "Hence education means the enterprise of supplying the conditions which insure growth, or adequacy of life, irrespective of age" (p. 51). To move beyond the mere initial growth and make the education process worthwhile, the greatly structured mode of learning must be coupled with its antithesis, the more contextual learning, to insure attainment of greater knowledge.

Only meaningful and engaging learning will lead to social transformation—the learners, or citizens, will gain greater freedom. "Freedom means essentially the part played by thinking—which is personal—in learning:—it means intellectual initiative, independence in observation, judicious invention, fore-sight of consequences, and ingenuity of adaptation to them" (p. 302). Instead of providing pre-fabricated, contrived instruction, schools should provide students the opportunity of experimenting with their own knowings.

> The problem of instruction is thus that of finding material which will engage a person in specific activities having an aim or purpose of

> moment or interest to him, and dealing with the things not as gymnastic appliances but as conditions for the attainment of ends. (p. 132)

Dewey joins the importance of contextual, experiential learning with political ends. Democracy is grounded in individual contexts. If it is the aim of society to promote a democratic way of life, then an education which includes variation in how knowledge is measured—standards *and* specific contextual knowledge—is necessary. Education, as democracy, must encourage risk-taking because growth comes from branching out, trying new methods. Zero growth leads to unhappiness as does dependence and sheltering (p. 42). "The specific adaptability of an immature creature for growth constitutes his plasticity" (p. 44). Increased plasticity and growth are regarded as having an end instead of being an end because more importantly, even after formal schooling ends, growth continues (p. 50). Students as citizens would continue to mature and change after they leave the school building far behind. "The learning in school should be continuous with that out of school" (p. 358). Democracy as a way of life and education for that life are seamless activities which both demand commonalties (e.g. an agreement that difference is to be expected) as well as immediate and individual, contextual learning.

Cognitive/Reflective and Vocational/Physical Development

The third major dualistic relationship found in Dewey's work centers around the means required for participation in democracy—a way of life that

demands cognitive and reflective thought as well as vocational skills and a capacity to make one's way economically.

The Greeks preceded Dewey by 2500 years in educating for the purpose of creating citizens. They understood very well that democracy is not a natural outcome but an outcome that must be carefully and deliberately taught and practiced. Therefore, they adopted a firm belief in social efficiency—a sharing in the give and take of experience; doing things which involve relationships with others (p. 120). "Education in its broadest sense, is the means of this social continuity of life" (p. 2), an on-going thought-action-thought-action that informs in education as in social progress.

The first half of this duality—cognitive/reflective development—was Greek in origin, urging a greater use of mental faculties to provide discipline of thought, which in turn, they reasoned, would develop discipline of action. Specifically, "Plato's starting point is that the origination of society depends ultimately upon knowledge of the end of existence. If we do not know its end, we shall be at the mercy of accident and caprice" (p. 88). He considered education as crucial to understanding how society shapes the future (p. 88): "knowledge of the past is the key to understanding the present" (p. 213). Dewey understood the need for a reflective view of society, a broad historical view: "Life at any stage short of attainment of this goal is merely an unfolding toward it" (p. 56).

Social progress therefore means using intellectual tools (p. 226). Education must help students understand their place in the stream of history as

a means of being better able to cope with the future (p. 56). Education must "produce in schools a projection in type of the society we should like to realize, and by forming minds in accord with it gradually modify the larger and more recalcitrant features of adult society" (p. 317). This *is* the place of education, Dewey suggested, to help students and future citizens improve society by understanding both the historical context and the moral goals of society. These were methods for reflection.

In Dewey's mind, the requirements for citizenship extended beyond contemplation of past and future and included an emphasis on the day to day active present. His definition of social efficiency expanded the Greek notion of formal education: "social efficiency is attained not by negative constraint but by positive use of native individual capacities in occupations having a social meaning" (p. 118). It means that each person should be able to make it economically in the world (p. 119).

Thus, general education was, in his mind, to provide to citizens vocational, employment skills. In the past, apprentices learned the trade for which they were preparing by living with their master and studying his skill. Today the use of practical experiences are more formal, infused more into the curriculum because vast numbers of people need to engage in some sort of vocational endeavor (p. 275) and because vocational learning is now more technical, more rapidly changing, and it requires broader judgment from the worker. Vocationalism gained in importance because industry gained in importance (p. 313) and because society now recognizes that experimentation

is highly beneficial to students as they become workers. Students can manipulate many materials and build, create, formulate, and grow things to develop experiences in occupations (p. 196). These occupational experiences give students an appreciation, skill, and resulting satisfaction with their work (p. 196).

Extending the philosophical concepts of vocational learning to all of education, Dewey believed that children should be able to pick the things that interest them to work on so they may literally discover their calling. "The only adequate training for occupations is training through occupations" (p. 310). "Education *through* occupations consequently combines within itself more of the factors conducive to learning than any other method" (p. 309). "A right occupation means simply that the aptitudes of a person are in adequate play, working with the minimum of friction and maximum of satisfaction" (p. 308).

But people must engage in more than just their vocation. Cognitive/reflective and vocational/physical education must remain dynamic dualities, looking more broadly and beyond as well as narrowly and immediately. As Dewey says, "nothing could be more absurd than to try to educate individuals with an eye to only one line of activity" (p. 307). They must experience things to not only enhance their vocation but to enhance their lives (p. 308). "Put in concrete terms, there is danger that vocational education will be interpreted in theory and practice as trade education: as a means of securing technical efficiency in specialized future pursuits" (p. 315). If vocational education becomes trade education then educating is just

perpetuating "the existing industrial order of society, instead of operating as a means of transformation" (p. 316).

On the other hand, still playing on the duality, choosing things that immediately interests them helps students to understand not only that particular vocation but beyond the vocation as well. "If they are indeed able to choose something that interests them, this then signifies the desire to be subject to something other than the current social order" (p. 319). "(E)ducation must certainly be careful that the vocational preparation of youth is such as to engage them in continuous reorganization of aims and methods" (p. 311).

Some schools exist in which the development of the student's mind equals the development of the student's abilities, but on the whole, "We still somehow believe that a truly liberal education cannot have anything in common with industrial affairs" (p. 256). Dewey says that, "The separation of the two aims in education is fatal to democracy; the adoption of the narrower meaning of efficiency deprives it of its essential justification" (p. 121). "(I)t is the particular task of education at the present time to struggle in behalf of an aim in which social efficiency and personal culture are synonyms instead of antagonists" (p. 122). "Democratic society is peculiarly dependent for its maintenance upon the use in forming a course of study of criteria which are broadly human" (p. 192). A democratically constituted society therefore has, "greater reliance upon the recognition of mutual interests as a factor in social control" and "continuous readjustment through meeting the new situations produced by varied intercourse" (p. 86).

"Hence it is the business of education in a democratic social group to struggle against this isolation in order that the various interests may reinforce and play into one another" (p. 249), to ensure that "the scientific inquirer shall not be merely the scientist, the teacher merely the pedagogue, the clergyman merely one who wears the cloth, and so on" (p. 308). Therefore, democratic societies are those that strive for "mutually shared interests in distinction from those which aim simply at the preservation of established customs" (p. 322). They allow for diversity and each to engage in his or her own activities. Vocational skills are grounded skills, skills that provide common grounds for citizens to act, exchange, and change as an outgrowth of shared experiences.

"A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience" (p. 87). Schools have to model that: "school must itself be a community life in all which that implies" (p. 358). It must allow for skills development and for mental development so that each individual may impact his or her community in a much greater way. "The conception of education as a social process and function has no definite meaning until we define the kind of society we have in mind" (p.97). If the society we have in mind is still one based upon democracy, then we must continually remember that associated living goes beyond business transactions and beyond discussions over politics. Associated living means understanding that interaction with one another must take place continually and in both realms.

Thus, for Dewey, the only way to engage in educative epistemology, pedagogy, and participation—for education and democratic purposes—is

through acknowledging and encouraging the existence of dualities of methods in attaining educative and democratic ends. Ensuring that those dualistic concepts of cognitive and vocational education maintain and reinforce their dynamic co-existence increases learning, growth, and change. In a democratic society, those are the means *and* the ends, for education without democratic participation and reflection is just as one-dimensional as democracy without knowledge and understanding. When reflective, practical education and informed democracy interact, the citizens *and* the civilization benefit.

Benjamin Barber

Benjamin Barber joins Jefferson, Mann, and Dewey in a philosophical reflection on the crucial relationship between education and democracy. The continuity of the reflections are readily evident in his focus on liberty—giving primacy to the individual—*and* community—giving primacy to the collective—and how these must always be balanced, one in terms of the other. The crucial role of education is in teaching how to make judgments regarding an appropriate balance of these two competing goods in any specific situation. But Barber wishes to make and underscore a further point about the immediate historical context in which he is writing. The issues have become far more subtle, nuanced and difficult to judge and therefore require far more of a free public education than even his philosophical predecessors had envisioned. In order to demonstrate his point, he takes the reader through a number of issues which involve various levels of dissonance but which are each intensely political which must be taught for understanding and judgment. Following a

discussion on liberty and community in the ensuing pages is a consideration of multiculturalism in America, of the caution of present-mindedness in America, the difference in truth and what people believe about America, the difference between being neutral and being partial, and finally to the issue of school purpose: the democracy-economy debate.

The purpose of considering each of these is to demonstrate Barber's (1992) understanding of the relationship between education and democracy but, equally, also his understanding of the depth of the education required for successful citizen practice of democracy in the late twentieth century. Like those other authors who had gone before him, Barber sees democracy as utterly dependent upon citizens not only understanding but being able to make judgments based on what at best seem subtle, often arcane topics, posed as dualisms or paradoxes.

Liberty and Community

The first paradoxical duo regards liberty. "Rousseau, who knew so much about the paradoxes of liberty, observed that freedom is a food easy to eat and hard to digest" (p. 209). Barber addressed the combination of liberty and community, or, put another way, pluribus and unum. On the one hand, says Barber, we as Americans value individuality, so we expect schools to teach freedom that we may establish our own laws and make our own choices to eventually become autonomous. On the other hand, we also believe in associated living which requires a certain coming together in our communities.

We therefore ask schools to instruct children in the ways of social relations, citizenship, teaming, and unity.

However, in a way these two seemingly different concepts are very much linked. It is our notion of liberty, power, or freedom to do as we deem appropriate that gives us this sense of community or cohesion: "membership in a community entails responsibilities and duties which are likely to be felt as binding only to the degree individuals feel empowered in the community" (p. 255). Barber says that, "To teach liberty is to teach citizenship" (p. 232). Thus, if one of these is present, the other will follow.

Quite often, however, the two notions are far from linked in our own minds. In fact, we tend to separate them from one another as seen in our desire for more freedom and for less responsibility to others. Americans "conceive of themselves as rights-bearers without any duties whatsoever" (p. 237). We deny our civic duties and yet we blame the government when it does not hold up its part of the bargain in granting us numerous liberties and opportunities. In this vein, we have begun to focus more on liberation than on liberty. We now wish to be free from others, the government, and from the constraints and responsibilities they confer upon us. This is merely a symptom of the change in meaning of the term citizenship in our modern democracy. But "unless we assume the responsibilities of citizens we will not be able to preserve the liberties they entail" (p. 246).

To better understand the relationship between democracy and education as it corresponds with this first paradox, Barber cites Alexis de Tocqueville who

reminds us that freedom gives us a sense of community, not a sense of isolation. Students must learn to be free and not alone; freedom is not solitude, but the opportunity to make choices.

> People feel free concretely not simply when they have choices, but when their choices feel meaningful; not when there is chaos and disorder in which anything is possible, but when what is possible is a set of life choices ordered by ethical or religious values they have chosen for themselves; not when they are left alone, but when they participate in the free communities that permit them to define common lives autonomously and establish common identities freely. (p. 25)

Barber summarizes: "we are free *through* laws we make for ourselves rather than free *from* the laws" (p. 264). This freedom "yields community, so the forms of community and commonality alone yield freedom. Education makes citizens; only citizens can forge freedom. Democracy allows people to govern themselves; indeed, it insists that they do so. Education teaches them the liberty that makes self-government possible" (p. 265). Therefore, "(e)ducation is about learning to be free, and means ultimately setting students free from their teachers" yet keeping in mind that there exists a "great deal of difference between setting them free and leaving them alone; between cultivating their autonomy and annihilating all limits; between helping them to make choices and pushing them into free-fall" (p. 209).

Education must traverse the thin line between these two. It must instruct in the ways of liberty while reinforcing the centrality of community; education must highlight the importance of this paradox. It is when these two—liberty and community—remain intact as such and continue to counterbalance one another that enables liberty to extend boundaries without demolishing them. It is when "education for democracy must mean learning to be free" (p. 237).

Multiculturalism and Americanism

> Around the world the cry "Democracy!" has shattered tyranny's silence and caused the most stubborn of dictators to lose their confidence in the politics of fear. Walls are coming down and iron curtains are being drawn for the last time. The Statue of Liberty is an icon for young men and women who have never known freedom in lands that have never been democratic. Even in these hard and cynical times, America remains for many abroad what Lincoln called the "last best hope." But is it still that for Americans? Can it be? That is our paradox. (p. 3)

In this passage Barber wishes to make us aware that what America and its symbols stand for to those outside of her borders may not signify the same thing to those of us who live within. Frequently the things of which we as a nation boast are the very things that may be hard to find like equality of opportunity and an undivided populace.

Multiculturalism and Americanism, or one-culturalism, are the two sides of a second paradoxical relationship. We live in a nation composed of dozens of different cultures holding their own language, mores, and beliefs, existing simultaneously under one nation. Groups practice any number of religions within our borders and skin color may reflect any hue of the human rainbow. As a result, various ethnic groups now hyphenate their American title to make more obvious the roots from which they came. They may also insist upon education which focuses on the particulars of history according to an alternate point of view. Much good results from this, but, "Teaching becomes a matter of pedagogical narrowcasting: each group gets its own texts, its own stories, its own subject matter. Outsiders are not invited to participate since they cannot possibly be expected to understand" (p. 131). Barber says that with so much tunnel-vision,

> Common ground ceases to exist; without common ground there can be no common teaching. And without common teaching there is no American story and so no America, only the pieces. How exactly democracy is supposed to survive in such a setting is not altogether clear. (p. 132)

Thus, too much of an emphasis on this one side of the paradox, the multicultural aspect of our nation, causes us as a collective nation to break down.

What does unite us under the title *American* is the set of beliefs upon which this nation was founded—the Americanism side of the paradox. The first Europeans arrived here desirous of creating a new destiny for themselves—one with liberties found nowhere else on earth. Within the first two hundred years, they put these desires and philosophies in writing to further guide the generations to come. The belief in that document, that *Constitution*, is what constitutes or makes up the term "American." Thus, "America's patriotism was rooted in ideas, not blood; in law, not kinship; in voluntary citizenship, not given roots; in constitutional faith, not religious orthodoxy" (p. 58). Agreement upon such a unique, unyielding principle of dedication to an idea is what attracts immigrants from around the world and makes the American culture pluralistic—Americanism *is* multiculturalism; they coexist and define one another. "Ironically, it is precisely this tolerance for diversity and openness to difference that constitutes the common ground of American citizenship" (p. 50). America herself is a paradox.

Relating this to education and democracy, Barber suggests the teaching of cultures by using them as a framework for instructing in the matters of democracy, for "democracy's constitutional and civic framework is independent of culture" (p. 146). He says that students must learn the ways of democracy regardless of the culture within which it is relayed. They must learn ethics and how to make wise decisions using the culture within which they function merely as a context. The choices are still the same. If the dominant culture is used as the framework from which to teach, then allow for all lessons regarding

democracy—and the lack thereof—to become the focus of learning. The focus should be on the lessons learned by that culture through their mistakes and successes.

Barber also says that "respect for the full diversity and plurality of American life is possible only when students have an opportunity to interact outside of their classroom" (p. 255). Therefore, students of many different cultures should be allowed the opportunity to associate with and learn from one another in less structured environments—neighborhoods and social settings. The only way this will occur and have any positive impact is if in the classroom the students learned that differences should be discussed openly and candidly; this learning will then transfer to the other contexts. Ignoring differences only denies that Americanism means multiculturalism, and to separate one concept from the other or to upset the balance of the Americanism/multiculturalism paradox is to uproot democracy and deny the special meaning of the term *American.*

Past and Present

If multiculturalism is a clear and potent political issue, time, particularly the deep historical past, is subtle and not on the lips of any politician. Given its importance to our future as a democracy, however, Barber argues it is no less important to consider: "Consciousness of time is always mired in paradox and deception—countless discrete nows run together like so many film stills to produce a moving picture" (p. 30). Americanism means grappling with this issue of time: It has always concurrently signified liberation from a constraining

past and celebration of what the present freedoms may bring. It means holding high regard for one's old-world heritage while maintaining pride in one's new accomplishments. "To portray an American story is necessarily to look forward as well as backward. To be an American is to have an inkling of what an American can be, should become, will turn into" (p. 30). Thus, Americanism is a balanced focus on the past and the present.

Today, however, we increasingly try escaping everything that chains us to the past. Of course, "Abjuring the past comes easily to people whose journey to America is often a journey out of and against some parochial, confining history" (p. 35). We are quick to celebrate the future. So we end up living in the present, as television and technology encourage us to do, to make the most of right now. Barber believes we have therefore become a "me-now" generation that ". . . therapeutically disavows responsibility for all the 'me-thens' from which it has issued" (p. 34).

"Yet our American presentness belies this conceit and it cripples us as inhabitants of time. Weak on the past, we are less secure in the future than we might think" (p. 35). "The result is an obdurate present-mindedness perilous to the continuity of a free society. Societies can push out into the future only by extending their past; but when they are taught to disdain their past, they become resistant to innovation" (p. 32). Present-mindedness encourages one to have no need for the past and the lessons it may teach. "(A) vilified past also robs history's offcasts of hope, and, in making them victims, takes away the possibility of change and reform" (p. 29).

Furthermore, ignorance of time causes people to feel immortal. They lose their place in history and become irresponsible. Barber wishes to remind us that time is a river, not frozen snapshots, with today anchoring itself in yesterday. We gain freedom *through* history not by running from it, and we should not ignore the past nor feel chained to it. "As we make war on history," all we manage to do is

> reinforce its hold over us. To imagine even the most novel futures is to deconstruct and then reconstruct the past. Even the past turns out to be the product of an act of imagination. Thus all useful education begins with and circles back to historical understanding. (p. 21)

We create our futures based upon what we know of the past. It is this knowledge of our history that frees us from the very chains that the past meant. "History is not some specialized subject in technical education, it *is* liberal education; it is an account in the narrative mode of our being as a people, as a 'public.'" (p. 22) Barber would have us always stress the importance of history and time and the changes it has caused. This time-embeddedness will then produce a patriot concerned with the past, present, and future of the community within which she lives. Our story's outcome is still dependent upon us, upon our students, and how we all decide to end it. Our choice is an amalgamation of all we have learned over time.

Truth and Canons

The story we tell about ourselves is what connects our present to our past. Barber says that education itself is storytelling and we as educators must determine what that story is. He says that history is always a story with "prescriptive and moral implications" (p. 57); it is "the story we choose to believe in, and our beliefs help shape what we understand as history" (p. 62).

How to convey the most accurate portrait of America and her people is the question posed by the fourth paradoxical duo. Thus, this paradox represents the perpetual questioning of reality: singular truth and multiple canons. Barber defines a canon as "simply (or not so simply) a distilled version of the past, our story is reconstructed as a coherent and authoritative body of ideas authored by the forebears of our culture" (p. 23). Simply put, it is an argument or point of view. "Since canons are how we fix the past, whether we define them rigidly or loosely, unitary or plural, closed or open, will define how we understand our liberty" (p. 28).

Probably more than any other place, the American past and present contain many versions of reality. Barber says that this is where the paradox evidences itself: "There has been no single historical canon, but an evolving argument. And if the canon turns us into 'Us,' we in turn transform the canon into 'The Canon': It creates Us as we create It" (p. 27). He says that to believe the story is to make it true and to disbelieve it means to falsify it. Thus, truth is whatever canon we choose to adopt.

> Like our culture and values, our story distilled as a canon has been an uneasy amalgam of fixity and change, of unity and diversity, of authority and freedom. If the story of our past is made too rigid, we are impaled on it; but if it is too pliant, it fails to define us. (p. 24)

We must traverse this fine line consciously, rather than blindly hoping our definition truly does define us.

As would seem the case, there exists conflict between natives or past immigrants and other fractions over who's story is correct.

> To insist that our story is The Story is more likely to impose a particular history on everyone than it is to disclose a truly universal tale. However, when we recognize the plurality of stories, we can begin to focus on what they share without permitting any one story to become paradigmatic. (p. 28)

In other words, acknowledging that there is no one truth actually leads us to a more realistic or truthful version of our history. Thus, "Acknowledging that there is more than one form of 'the Truth' does not necessarily entail the demise of all truth" (p. 140).

If "Education is systematic storytelling" (p. 21), then teaching history or literature from the non-dominant way of thinking perspective challenges the "one truth" idea. Education *should* pick apart the story of history. It should not

just teach prudence, partiality, and limits. "The educator's art is to prompt questions that expose our illusions and at the same time to tether illusion to provisional moorings. The teacher must know how to arouse but also how to mollify the faculty of doubt" (p. 125).

> The great tradition of philosophy rightly being subjected to stern interrogation, when responding at its best to that interrogation, establishes a middle ground. It holds both True Belief (dogmatism) and unexamined opinion (prejudice) in suspicion, but it knows it must find a provisional resting point for knowledge and conduct somewhere in between these unacceptable extremes. (p. 123)

It helps students understand that there is a truth *and* multiple canons, but the subtlety of the message is clearly beyond fourth grade, eighth grade or even twelfth grade U. S. history. The point is the depth of understanding needed to be able to be a helpful citizen. But that is not all. Barber continues this difficult trek.

Neutrality and Partiality

As stated above, education is training in the middle ground between dogmatism and prejudice. Barber considers this "middle ground education", "with a sensitivity to difference and to the need to educate to overcome difference" (p. 134). Barber believes that our differences should be

acknowledged and then moved beyond. But middle ground education is more than that.

This nation and its founding ideals originally stemmed from rights language. The colonists came to America so that they may gain freedom of religion and an opportunity for self-government. The use of rights language, however, eventually caused the obvious inequalities found here to become indigestible. The language began to permeate the *Constitution* and the development of a nation. In fact, we have repeatedly given greater freedom to groups of Americans through the use of such a dialogue. This language has given its people the license and motivation to pursue rights and equality. Without the voicing of opinions, things may not have changed as they have.

The paradox: "Democracy depends on a capacity to ask questions and on the faculty for independent thought and action, but democratic communities can be corroded by unending skepticism and undermined by forms of independence that recognize no mutuality" (p. 108). Language provides us rights, is the medium with which we communicate, but it can also alienate others. "(T)here is both a need and a right to be heard—a right secured only through an education in liberty. This right, however, is not necessarily the same thing as the right to stop others from talking or the right to cease listening" (pp. 108-109). Sometimes listening alone challenges our capacities.

We should refrain from blind acceptance, yet keeping in mind that,

> Skepticism is an essential but slippery and thus dangerously problematic teaching tool. It demystifies and decodes; it denies absolutes; it cuts through rationalization and hypocrisy. Yet it is a whirling blade, an obdurate reaper hard to switch off at will. It is not particularly discriminating. (p. 111)

"(I)t has been said that the one thing you cannot do with bayonets is sit on them" (p. 112).

But, "If education is treated as or reduced to nothing more than giving the right answers—the proper values, the canon, *the* moral Truth—it becomes a kind of indoctrination, what generous social scientists refer to as a form of socialization" (p. 82). Education then must be radicalism and free open speech instead of

> mythmaking and then dogma, and finally a stale liturgy that does more to embalm than to disclose identity. Educators know better. It has been the premise of all pedagogy since Socrates that the answer that cannot withstand questioning is not worth much, just as the story that cannot withstand challenge is without value to liberty. (p. 82)

Reason can rule our society as long as all are educated and their differences of opinion are encouraged and not punished. Then the empowered will make sound judgments because they have considered all options and all

variations of potential reality. "The only 'truth' the modern school can have is produced by democracy: consensus arising out of an undominated discourse to which all have equal access" (p. 213). Educators must ensure that students walk the ground found between this paradox. Good decisions will result.

Capitalism and Volunteerism

Finally, and in returning to echo his predecessors (though with a significant update) Barber turns to the question of the dual purpose of schools: democracy and the economy. One of the main reasons immigrants have crossed the vast ocean for over four hundred years to begin anew here is for the opportunity to engage in our system of free enterprise. Capitalism is our mantra and often our rationale for engaging in war. Yet, American schools were founded in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries upon the idea of democracy, the need to give back in the form of service.

With more people successful in the sense of capital accumulation Americans feel less victorious since they are no longer individually elite. When the market began to rise in importance the state was then seen as a threat to private liberty. In effect, some now believe education is mainly to prepare youth for business to better ensure that we do not lose our capitalist system. Barber says that "the educational careerist now thinks that all of life is a preparation for business" (p. 205). This may seem well and good, but schools become pawns of economics instead of training grounds for democracy. "Education as vocationalism in service to society becomes a matter of socialization rather than scrutiny, of spelling out consequences rather than probing premises, of

answering society's questions rather than questioning society's answers" (p. 207). The paradox between capitalism and service becomes unbalanced.

Citizenship does not link itself in our minds to freedom so service seems coercive to some. We watch out for ourselves instead of others. And since the growth of corporations sees the democratic state as a foe, then no wonder service is seen as volunteerism and charity as opposed to civility and responsibility. Service has also been associated with punishment. "To make people serve others may produce desirable behavior, but it does not create responsible and autonomous individuals" (p. 250).

To reverse the current imbalance and make service part of any program, we must reinstate the true meaning of service. Educators must teach pedagogy and theory so students understand that helping others is not simply altruistic. It should also mean helping yourself. Barber says that there should be a requirement of national service for youth—a link between education and experience—but it is not to be seen as charity or repaying of a debt. "Education-based community service programs empower students even as they learn" (p. 252). This takes us back to the meaning of liberty: empowerment within one's community. Once we place service—individual power to effect change in that community—back into our mode of operation without the current stigma, then our communities and their prosperity will grow. Moreover, stressing the importance of both capitalism and volunteerism allows individuals to realize the American Dream while maintaining American unity and concern for our fellow man.

In summary, Barber believes that the relationship between democracy and education evinces itself through the interplay of several paradoxical relationships. These working relationships, though seemingly improbable, are what maintain an effective balance between very strong societal standards vying for attention in our present American context. They keep Americans focused on more than one appropriate response to reality, continually pushing their thinking. In themselves, these paradoxes teach the mores of this nation and its democratic stance. The real lesson is not in learning the paradox but in understanding paradox, competing dualism, and how important it is in a democracy to reach an unprincipled agreement. Without this idea of balance, education is limited and democracy is impossible. One cannot be free without recognizing the limitations of that freedom in the collective.

Discussion

The relationship between democracy and education plays out in four distinctly different ways in the political philosophies of Thomas Jefferson, Horace Mann, John Dewey, and Benjamin Barber. Around the time of the American Revolution and the establishment of a new nation, Jefferson urged that education would guard the existence of liberty while concurrently enabling self-government to occur. He argued that without protecting the citizens' rights, the individual and collective growth that allows self-government to exist could not occur. In the mid- to late-1800s, the nation still in its formative development, Mann reiterated the education-democracy interaction by insisting that education teaches responsibility, which undergirds the possibility of democracy;

education, that its, at its core, teaches the give and take of being a citizen.

Though Mann and Dewey shared the middle to late part of the nineteenth century, they actually wrote in distinctly different eras. By Dewey's time the nation was established and there was less need to focus on the nation building as such. John Dewey became one of America's earliest and best known philosopher-educators with a keen eye to politics. He focused the issue of education and democracy in great detail, and developed the two together around issues of epistemology, pedagogy, and participation. In each, he said, there were dualisms— "both/and" tensions which constituted the heart of education and its twin, democracy. Finally, our own contemporary, Benjamin Barber, continued the Dewey tradition in two important ways. First he emphasized education and democracy as mutual concepts, and second, he saw tensions, seemingly antithetical concepts, as paradoxes that lay at the heart of both education and democracy. These paradoxes, rather than being a problem for democracy and education, are the enablers that permit citizens/students to balance seemingly opposite yet equally important dimensions of issues in learning and self-governance.

Though each of these men chose their own unique terms and descriptors of this relationship in vastly different points in time along the American continuum, several commonalties surface. The first commonality concerns the relationship between democracy and education itself. They saw this relationship as reciprocal, shaped through the playing out of underlying relationships between specific political—and often educational—concepts.

According to the authors, the way these concepts continually influence one another has a direct impact on the way education and democracy play out in American society.

For example, Jefferson thought that protecting the relationship between democracy and education meant protecting a reciprocal relationship between liberty and self-government. Support for liberty was to be interpreted in relationship to support for self-government, one with emphasis on the individual, the other underscoring the collective, but always in relationship. Mann chose a slightly different stance, focusing on the relationship between rights and responsibilities. One's rights are always defined in relationship to one's responsibilities, a balance that Mann saw as also an individual-collective balance. All four authors firmly believed that the way the relationship between the individual and the collective is carried out would spell the difference between anarchy, on the one hand, and some form of totalitarianism on the other. A "good" or balanced relationship would create a society of individuals exercising freedom *and* a unified body of well-informed citizens acting on behalf of all. The society that they envisioned was both individualistic and communitarian. The trick was to learn how to balance the two. That is where education was needed.

If there was an ideology it was not about the absolute of either but the balance of both. The balance is the critical concept. It was for this reason that all four of the authors unequivocally believed that the existence of these underlying relationships, the tensions between competing goods, would play a

major role in the development of this experimentation in democracy. And because people would have to be knowledgeable of the reciprocal nature of rights and responsibilities, of liberty and community, of thinking and experiencing, education was essential to making the experiment work. The balance is not absolute, not an either/or choice, but consists of infinite points along a continuum, never defined once and for all, but as each was applied in specific situations. This "applied learning" was the essence of democracy, for it required citizens to be thoughtful and make judgments. Students would first learn of these associations so they as citizens could use the relationships in dealing with real situations. The authors maintained that if the relationships received inadequate attention in school, education would suffer; if they did not maintain their balance in practice, democracy would suffer. The bond between democracy and education was clear and tight. For these four authors, these specific acts of balance, making judgments about the relationships, were the heart of the interaction between democracy and education.

In a second commonality, each of the four authors focused upon one of the subordinate relationships in particular—that between freedom and responsibility. They each found the association between freedom and responsibility to be of central importance. Jefferson fundamentally distrusted governmental institutions. He worried that, over time, if entrusted to a small, elite populace, such as did the governments in England and on the European Continent, government would no longer serve the common man's needs. He stressed the need for public education in America's democracy as a built-in

protector of freedom—and freedom as a basic human right. A knowledgeable populace, he reasoned, would police the activities of the government and thus people would protect themselves against the government. On the other hand, receiving an education would better enable the individual to act responsibly as a member of government, such as a representative, or as a member of the community, such as a worker or inventor. Similarly, Mann thought that government, through education, guaranteed freedom and other individual rights when it provided instruction on civic virtue to individuals about not only their rights but their societal obligations. Government teaches lessons on laws, governmental procedures, leadership, and productivity, but the reciprocal, the required payback, is that individuals acquire responsibilities back to the government and society in general, which in turn guarantees the freedoms.

Dewey's stance was only slightly different though his argument is considerably more circuitous and opaque. He discussed the relationship between cognitive/reflective and vocational/physical development. He believed that in providing an education which stresses not only knowledge but practical skills, students (citizens in the making) are allowed greater freedom for making students become better receivers and producers of information, more ready to understand principles applied to context, and, in a word, they are more self-actualized. But in so doing, and here he sounds like both Jefferson and Mann, students, now citizens, also encumber a debt to advance and provide for the well-being of society. Barber likewise considered the relationship between liberty and responsibilities to the community. He thought that freedom of choice

is what causes individuals to grow and to support their community. When given more options and, ironically its reciprocal, more boundaries (such as responsibilities to others), people sense greater freedom. Barber said that educating about responsibilities to the community *is* educating about liberty. He states what the others strongly implied, these are nearly one in the same.

Thirdly, these authors were similar in envisioning an education system that specifically taught students the ways of American democracy. For example, Mann wanted all students to learn also about the specific mechanism of governance including, for example, the three branches of government and an understanding of the skepticism that gave rise to them, for what purpose the founders established them. He wanted to prevent anarchy by instructing students in the ways of the judicial and legislative processes and especially the citizens' role in creating laws and handling disputes. Dewey and Barber each stress education but with more emphasis on the nuances and intricacies of "democratic" content (process) and methods in education. Both were born into a nation where public education had already taken hold and was taken as a fact of life. This permitted these later authors to focus the discussion not on whether to establish public education, on what it would look like in terms of content, but in the subtleties of what is required for the development of a far larger, more complex and faster changing society. From the twentieth century perspective, these were the real topics up for debate.

A fourth similarity dealt with who pays. Due to the *necessary* relationship between education and democracy, even if expressed in different terms and

different emphases, all insisted on political and financial public support of education. In a democracy, they believed that education must be provided to the masses at public expense. This was the dollar cost of democracy. This was intentionally an expansive role for education geographically as well as in a "social program" sense to provide education to those who could not afford it. Mann would add women. Dewey would add more active methods of teaching, and Barber would extend the years of education to support increased college admittance. Education in a democracy gradually meant extensive education for everyone—whatever was necessary for the historical context in which they lived.

Finally, though by no means emphasized as much as democracy as a purpose of education, there appeared in these selected writings an acknowledgment of an important relationship between education and one's livelihood. There appeared to be two arguments for this relationship, one individual, one collective. An individual, they reasoned, could not be an otherwise good citizen without the means of being economically productive. A citizen, that is, could not be free politically but shackled economically and still be truly free. Similarly, a nation could not be poor and free at the same time. A nation requires sufficient wealth to provide for, for example, the democratic prerequisite of education and other necessities if it is to flourish. By the late eighteenth century and beyond, with industrialism on the rise, this relationship was obvious even to Jefferson the agrarian, more so to his successors in this story. Even with this argument about individual and collective wealth, however,

the end purpose was not the money but the way of life it supported. Economics and politics are both important, but in the end, democracy trumps money as the fundamental American value as viewed by Jefferson, Mann, Dewey, and Barber.

In summary, these four authors saw education and democracy as inseparable concepts. Education was the necessary prerequisite for democracy, the way to inculcate citizens with information and skills to make them better members of society. Education would teach mores and ethics so that all Americans, no matter their ethnic or racial background, could have the same basic understandings and develop a sense of community. Education would prepare the young for their roles as electors, voters, and jurors by teaching them about the laws and how to make good decisions. Education would provide skills so that citizens could provide for themselves and in so doing, be economically productive members of society. And education would build a learning society, a society that would learn from its mistakes through experimentation and knowledge of the past. The Age of Enlightenment, with its implicit trust in reason, hardly dims across history. Indeed, the current President, William Clinton, with a vigorous education agenda, is fond of referring to America as still "a work in progress."

From the other side of the reciprocal relationship, a democratic government must create and support education to ensure its own survival. In Enlightenment reasoning, democracy requires good decision making founded upon knowledge. It assumes that citizens are responsible, engaged, and

thoughtful. The very government established by the new nation would require education if it were to function as intended. Individuals, properly educated, would take responsibility but could not be expected to do so on a broad scale without the state first performing *its* responsibility. The state has as much at stake in education as the citizens have a stake in democracy. It is an argument that reflects and supports our most core values as a people, at least as these are seen by these four authors.

Chapter 4

FINDINGS: A NATION AT RISK, GOALS 2000

This chapter includes descriptive findings from two policy documents: one initiated in 1981 and completed in 1983; the other initiated in 1989 and to be revisited annually till the year 2000. The two documents represent bipartisan governmental efforts to examine the status of education in America and to make recommendations for improvement based upon any noted deficiencies. The second of these, *Goals 2000*, additionally includes improvements/deficits made annually regarding deficiencies found in previous reports. A discussion of the main thrust of the two reports follows these descriptions. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the comparison between the four authors on one hand and the policy documents on the other.

A Nation at Risk

In 1981, Secretary of Education T. H. Bell charged the National Commission on Excellence in Education with the task of examining the quality of education in the United States. The commission focused on the following: the quality of teaching and learning in public and private schools, colleges, and universities; the comparison of our school system to that of other nations; the relationship between student achievement in high school and college admission requirements; the programs resulting in student success in college; the impact of social and educational changes on student achievement; and the problems preventing our nation from attaining educational excellence (pp. 1-2).

The document released by the commission eighteen months later therefore highlights national concerns and data elicited from various sources based upon the aforementioned focus, but assuredly provides several suggestions on how to improve the American educational system. This document, entitled *A Nation at Risk*, received its name from the commission's belief that,

> Our Nation is at risk. . . . We report to the American people that while we can take justifiable pride in what our schools and colleges have historically accomplished and contributed to the United States and the well-being of its people, the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people. (p. 5)

It is through attempting to list the risks, challenges, and possible solutions to our nation's educational dilemma that the National Commission on Excellence in Education provides insight on their perceived purposes of education in America.

Education as Way to American Supremacy

According to the National Commission on Excellence in Education, our educational system should allow Americans to successfully compete internationally and America to maintain its dominance in the world market. The commission was concerned that ". . . others are matching and surpassing our

educational attainments" (p. 5). It found that Americans were never ranked first or second when compared with other nations' students on nineteen academic tests, and on seven of those tests, America scored behind all other industrialized nations (p. 8). In several research papers submitted by selected experts worldwide, the commission found more disturbing evidence of how poorly American education stacks up to that of others. For example, one study stated that in the now defunct U.S.S.R., education is ". . . more strongly oriented toward the scientific and technical fields than is that of the United States" (p. 24). Another discovered that entrance exams for U.S. students focus on breadth of knowledge but have no depth (p. 27). Other studies made comparisons between our nation and others regarding curriculum content, student assessment, time spent in school and on school work, student achievement, and values education. And though ". . . we are first in science and technology, we are being challenged by other nations" (p. 53). This gave the commission reason to believe that we, as a nation, have lost our competitive edge. "Our once preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world" (p. 5). Many of our nation's industries have already fallen to foreign competition (p. 22).

> The risk is not only that the Japanese make automobiles more efficiently than Americans and have government subsidies for development and export. It is not just that the South Koreans recently built the world's most efficient steel mill, or that American machine tools, once the pride of the

> world, are being displaced by German products. It is also these developments signify a redistribution of trained capability throughout the globe. (pp. 6-7)

The commission also found that not only does a failing educational system prevent us from maintaining our preeminence in industry and commerce, it takes away a source of pride and strength.

> People are steadfast in their belief that education is the major foundation for the future strength of this country. They even considered education more important than developing the best industrial system or the strongest military force, perhaps because they understood education as the cornerstone of both. . . . And perhaps most important, citizens know and believe that the meaning of America to the rest of the world must be something better than it seems to many today. (pp. 20-21)

Increasingly over the past two centuries, the world has enviously looked to the United States for military backing, monetary support, and advances in industry and technology. America is a super-power. Many worry that that won't be the case much longer. Education, according to the commission, is what will better ensure that it *is* the case. The commission therefore concluded their report thus: "America's place in the world will be either secured or forfeited. Americans have succeeded before and so we shall again" (p. 84).

Education as a Preparer for the Workforce

American supremacy and competition with other nations has led to the necessity for economic advancement. The United States, as well as any nation, must continually develop, produce, export, and improve if it is to have a firm economic base upon which to operate in the world market. Education plays a large role in the development and improvement resulting in our nation's economic growth. It impacts us collectively since it provides us "the foundation for a satisfying life, an enlightened and civil society, a strong economy, and a secure Nation" (p. 21). In general, "Citizens know intuitively what some of the best economists have shown in their research, that education is one of the chief engines of a society's material well-being" (p. 21). It also impacts us individually, for "Learning is the indispensable investment required for success in the 'information age' we are entering" (p. 7). It produces the "ever-renewable human resources that are more durable and flexible than capital plant and equipment" (p. 19).

Part of the risk facing America, according to the committee, is the breaking of a promise made to all citizens: "to a fair chance and to the tools for developing their individual powers of mind and spirit to the utmost . . . to attain the mature and informed judgment needed to secure gainful employment, and to manage their own lives" (p. 8). A particular goal of education is the development to the fullest of all students' talents: "We must demand the best effort and performance from all students, whether they are gifted or less able, affluent or disadvantaged, whether destined for college, the farm, or industry" (p.

69). "Attaining that goal requires that we expect and assist all students to work to the limits of their capacities" (p. 16). Education's task is then to aid the graduates in choosing a profession, attaining a position, and then making these potential new workers ready for the role they will play in the workforce.

The additional demands placed upon society by the forever expanding knowledge base and technological advancement will mean that students need increasingly sophisticated training and preparation to ready them appropriately for the working world that awaits. The commission found that students would need greater skills in computers, computer-controlled equipment, laser technology and robotics (p. 11). These skills come in addition to the already obvious demands of English, mathematics, science, and social studies. But without education, they and the other workers currently impacting our economy will stagnate and fail to make changes and advancement in the world's forever changing market. Cognizant of America's already inadequate address of these demands, the commission quoted an educational researcher on this point: "'We are raising a new generation of Americans that is scientifically and technologically illiterate'" (p. 11). Education is currently failing to produce a well prepared workforce.

The commission is hopeful though. It believes that Americans can rise to the task of solving the nation's current educational problems since American colleges and universities are those responsible for producing a great many of the world's scientists and skilled technicians. Additionally, our nation has a record of success in education: "From the late 1800s through the mid-20th

century, American schools provided the educated workforce needed to deal with the success of the Industrial Revolution and to provide the margin of victory in two world wars" (p. 81). Even the mere existence of the American Dream plays to our advantage. It supports the belief that hard work and a focus on excellence will produce monetary success (p. 19). The commission sincerely hopes that the elusiveness of the Dream along with the economic desires it invokes will help to spur our nation into a commitment for education.

Education as a Developer of the Common Bond

"Still others are concerned that an over-emphasis on technical and occupational skills will leave little time for studying the arts and humanities that so enrich daily life, help maintain civility, and develop a sense of community" (p. 13). This highlights a legitimate fear. In fact, one of the studies received by the commission discovered that today's students, which include larger numbers of women and minorities, are migrating toward jobs in business, engineering, and computer science, leaving behind those in education, social science, fine and performing arts, and the humanities (p. 26). Not surprisingly and probably greatly contributing to this change, the commission found that "Today's students are more materialistic, more interested in power and status, less altruistic, and less inclined to be concerned about social issues and problems" (p. 26). The commission acknowledged that this change in students and general social mores has led to a national sense of frustration, "a dimming of personal expectations and the fear of losing a shared vision for America" (p. 15). America may once again regress into the Balkanization greatly characterizing

the decades during which there was a heavy influx of immigration. The U.S. responded with mass education to assimilate the new Americans. A similar response may be necessary here: "A high level of shared education is essential to a free, democratic society and to the fostering of a common culture, especially in a country that prides itself on pluralism and individual freedom" (p. 7). Education is necessary to provide Americans that common culture required for harmonious co-existence. "(E)ducation is the common bond of a pluralistic society" (p. 21). It is this firm educational foundation that leads citizens to reach a common understanding of issues and tradition. It enables the individuals to make wise decisions as a collective. It gives them the background necessary to partake in tradition and celebrate history. The commission uses the words of Jefferson:

> I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them but to inform their discretion. (p. 7)

Therefore, the National Commission on Excellence in Education's report, *A Nation at Risk*, conveys a message of urgency regarding an education system in need of much change. Not addressing this need for change leaves the nation at great risk—risk of being usurped as a world super-power; risk of creating and depending upon an unproductive workforce; and risk of becoming

a disunited populace. These fears speak to the existence of three very important purposes for education in America: maintenance of American supremacy and ability to compete in the world market; preparation of a workforce that will allow American commerce and industry to flourish; perpetuation of a common bond forged between all Americans and between our nation and others.

Goals 2000

President George Bush and the United States governors met at the Charlottesville Educational Summit in 1989 to discuss goals for the nation's schools. "The Goals were intended to energize public opinion and ongoing education reform efforts by holding us to much higher expectations for all students and for the schools and learning systems that serve them" (*The National Education Goals Report: Volume I*, 1993, p. xiii). The summit's attendees adopted six goals which have been readopted each of the four years following the summit up to 1993. Then in 1994 they added two more ". . . underscoring the critical roles that teachers and parents play in improving the nation's educational performance" (*The National Education Goals Report*, 1994, p. 13).

If reached, the resulting eight goals, referred to as *Goals 2000*, would mean considerable gains in educational achievement by the turn of the century. And according to the panel, more than education would be impacted by such advancement; America's ability to compete and prosper in a global economy would likewise change.

Education as a Gateway to Competition

The National Education Goals Panel saw education as a way to maintain or improve America's international standings in achievement—America's ability to compete with other countries. The panel likened the United States to a competitive team:

> In any sport, it is difficult to determine how well your team is doing unless you have complete, accurate, and up-to-date information on the team's performance. If you want to determine your team's standing and see how far you are from first place, you also need measures that allow you to compare your team to the very best in the league. (*The National Education Goals Report*, 1994, p. 13)

When comparing ourselves to the very best in the league of other industrialized nations, in some regards, the United States fares well. For instance, the report reminds readers of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing: "No other nation has ever accomplished such a feat" (p. 37). And it makes mention of the United States' first place award at the 1994 International Mathematical Olympiad in which team members from 69 countries competed for over nine, very intense hours (p. 38). And even when looking to comparative performances in basic literacy skills, in 1992, American nine- to fourteen-year-olds scored as well as those in other high-ranking countries (p. 37).

But in other assessments, the United States has not performed up to standard. American thirteen-year-old students scored lower in math than students of other countries' when tested by the International Education Association in the early 1980s. American students produced similar poor results in 1988 and 1991 on the International Assessment of Educational Progress (p. 39). The panel seemed optimistic, however, projecting a better showing in 1995 due to revisions made on national standards—revisions including new approaches to teaching and learning (p. 40).

After examining American strengths and weaknesses in relation to standings of other nations, the panel was able to conclude that, "if you expect to win, then all the players must work cooperatively to achieve common goals" (p. 13). For that reason among others, the panel adopted a very specific statement highlighting its intent: "The National Education Goals Panel strongly supports the development of clear, rigorous content standards by States and local communities, and it believes that voluntary national standards are essential to this effort" (p. 61). Therefore, in hopes of reaching what it termed "World-Class" success, "The Panel will endorse only those national content standards which, though uniquely American, are at least as challenging and rigorous as the academic expectations for students in other countries of the world" (p. 61). Goal 5 specifically states at what high standard we will measure our achievement: "By the year 2000, United States students will be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement" (p. 10).

The panel chose to include two very specific objectives addressing the lackluster showing in international competition: "Increase the standing of the United States on international mathematics assessments of 13-year-olds" (p.38); and "Increase the standing of the United States on international science assessments of 13-year-olds" (p. 39). To reach these objectives, the panel suggested increased instruction, greater numbers of qualified teachers, and more graduates of both genders and from all races in the fields of math and science.

In the future, the panel fully expects our nation to continue its international comparative assessments with an eye to ever increasing standards. Expecting better standings in math and science is only a beginning. The panel more than alludes to an expansion of content. It desires acknowledgment of the fact that "increasing student achievement in the core subject areas—English, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography—will be the ultimate test of successful education reform" (p. 30). However, the panel admitted that it had not yet made plans by way of the National Assessment of Educational Progress to collect data on civics, economics, or foreign language (p. 62).

Additionally, not only would the panel expect mastery in a greater number of core subjects, it would expect the number of students to also rise: "If the nation is to achieve Goal 5 . . . we must develop the . . . skills of all of our students, not simply the very best" (p. 38). "The National Education Goals call for all students to demonstrate competency in challenging subject matter and to

do so at internationally competitive levels of achievement" (p. 60). Even more, the panel would "set high expectations for education performance at every stage of a learner's life, from the preschool years through adulthood" (p. 13).

Education as Gateway to Economic Growth

The National Education Goals Panel not only reviewed past achievement, but it also looked to the future for establishing objectives. It was very certain of the implications for failing to adequately address the task at hand for America's education system. The panel members agreed "that unless the nation established clear education goals and all citizens worked cooperatively to achieve them, the United States would be woefully unprepared to face the technological, scientific, and economic challenges of the 21st century" (p. 13). Based upon this concern, the panel dedicated Chapter 2 to listing and discussing "why these core indicators are important to our nation's educational health and economic well-being" (p. 21). Even more assuredly, it included within two of the eight goals (Goals 3 and 6) language to further stress this point. Goal 3 points to the students' impact on the nation's economy: "By the year 2000, . . . every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our Nation's modern economy" (p. 9).

It is, however, Goal 6 which reads, "By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship" (p. 10), that links this concern for the American economy to the

obligations of American adults and American businesses. One objective listed under this goal expects that "Every major American business will be involved in strengthening the connection between education and work" (p. 10). The panel saw that this connection already exists in the form of on-the-job training, but was concerned that "roughly two-thirds of the funds invested annually by businesses in worker training are spent to train workers who already have college degrees" (p. 44). Also, though approximately 30% of all employed adults currently receive some form of financial support from their employer for continuing education, "those with four-year college degrees were nearly twice as likely as those with high school degrees, and six times as likely as those without a high school diploma, to report that they received some type of employer support" (p. 44).

Highly embedded in this need for additional education provided by businesses lies extremely low levels of literacy among adults from all professional arenas: "NALS results revealed that nearly half of all American adults read and write at the two lowest levels of English literacy" (p. 41). The panel found this statistic alarming since adults of limited reading abilities "are not likely to be able to perform the range of complex literacy tasks that the National Education Goals Panel considers important for competing successfully in a global economy or exercising the rights and responsibilities of citizenship" (p. 20). Statistically, poor literacy translates into adults that are half as likely to be employed, work fewer hours each week, receive a much lower income, and were much more likely to live in poverty and receive food stamps when

compared to the most literate of adults. The panel therefore suggested reducing this gap in literacy and education by encouraging businesses to provide more educational opportunities for all employees, especially those at the lower level positions. The panel felt that industrialized nations must "swiftly upgrade the literacy and technological skills of their present workforces to keep pace with rapidly changing job demands and fierce global competition" (p. 41). It also encouraged local communities to consider the needs of the "consumers" of education—parents, employers, colleges and universities (p. 67). Therefore one of the objectives listed under Goal 6 reads:

> All workers will have the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills, from basic to highly technical, needed to adapt to emerging new technologies, work methods, and markets through public and private educational, vocational, technical, workplace, or other programs. (p. 10)

The individual's obligation to him- or herself and the nation's economy is equally important. "(L)ack of a high school diploma or its equivalent almost certainly means that an individual will experience difficulty entering the labor market and will be at pronounced educational, social, and economic disadvantages throughout his or her life" (p. 28). These disadvantages include increased probability of receiving welfare support, being unemployed, earning less, and spending time in prison when compared with high school graduates (p. 28). Large discrepancies between high school graduates and college

graduates further strengthen the argument for continuing education. University of Michigan researchers found that the earning potential for men and women increases dramatically when comparing high school graduates and/or college attendees to college graduates (p. 28).

Thus, the National Education Goals Report strongly suggested that education greatly determines the success and failure rate of Americans in the international and economic realm. Increasing quality and quantity of instruction, on-the-job training, and graduation rates will help. But,

> The degree to which America remains economically competitive depends not only on the ability of our nation's schools and teachers to prepare students to meet higher expectations, but the degree to which business, labor, higher education, and adults themselves are willing to accept shared responsibility for increasing the skills and training of the nation's current labor force. (p. 41)

Discussion

The two documents, *A Nation at Risk* and *Goals 2000*, were very similar in a number of ways. First, their intents were the same. They both served to alert the public on the status of American education, hoping to increase awareness on the system's perceived shortcomings in curriculum, progress, and results. And they both included sufficient data to encourage a sense of urgency—the first document's title alone, *A Nation at Risk*, overwhelmingly

carries that notion. Similar intents produced similar content. The reports played to the American desire for international supremacy and successful competition, each containing numerous examples of how our students, inventors, engineers, etc., who had once dominated in their respective fields, now have been surpassed by others. They even invoked the vision of a struggling sense of pride that occasionally dips to the level of embarrassment.

After establishing the threat to American supremacy, the documents' authors chose to stress one plight they viewed as key to improving our standing—the economy. They believed that the nation's economy was suffering a depression partially in response to our recent inability to appropriately prepare students for the world of work. With few skills and/or, as *Goals 2000* specifically listed, poor reading ability, few American adults can choose and maintain a job. Adults would especially have difficulty in obtaining the more high-caliber positions if sent seeking without a diploma. Even outsiders understand all too well what that means. *A Nation at Risk* quoted one non-American, "Through European eyes, 'The American system is viewed as a vehicle for upward social mobility and as a means of solving or ameliorating social problems" (p. 38). Without education, success is more difficult to attain.

Both documents also suggested major changes in the overall system of schooling. They believed, without a doubt, that providing strong foundations in all subject areas, dedicating the greatest attention to reading, math, and science instruction, would help most. At the university level, they also suggested focusing on and improving teacher preparation programs and attracting better

teacher candidates. At the K-12 level, they suggested an extended school day and school year. *Goals 2000* encouraged, at the corporate level, more on-the-job training for employees in all positions. Its authors considered lifelong learning crucial to continued individual and corporate economic growth.

Finally, the two documents included issues of democratic participation, one more strongly than the other. *A Nation at Risk* explained that education was crucial for developing a common bond between people. It stated that Americans especially need a shared vision since they, or their ancestors, come from all over the world; they have very little in common otherwise. Americans also need enlightenment for making the decisions that greatly impact lives. *Goals 2000*, on the other hand, referred to citizenship, but failed to define what that means. Goal 3, entitled Student Achievement and Citizenship, said that, "every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship" (p. 9). Listed as an objective within, is "All students will be involved in activities that promote and demonstrate good citizenship" (p. 9). Goal 6, entitled Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning, says that "every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to . . . exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship" (p. 10). There are no objectives listed under this goal that address this portion of the goal. Only once did *Goals 2000* specifically talk about the role of the citizen in a traditionally democratic sense: "NALS results also suggest that adults with low levels of literacy are not likely to possess the skills and knowledge required of an informed electorate who can

'exercise fully the rights and responsibilities of citizenship'" (p. 43). With very little else in the way of a definition for citizenship, interpreters are left to their own devices.

The one major difference between the two policy documents is in commitment. *Goals 2000* already has gone to much greater lengths than *A Nation at Risk* as far as commitment to improvement. By reassessing and reporting every year, *Goals 2000* 's potential for reaching its stated goals increases greatly. Expanding from six to eight goals in 1994 supports that point further. But probably most important to the individual American, *Goals 2000* has focused attention on more than just the school-aged child. This document's consideration of pre-natal care, immunizations, parental activities, adult literacy rates, and on-the-job training, demonstrates more than just an expanded role of education. It demonstrates an increasing commitment to the improvement of education *and* human existence.

In sum, *A Nation at Risk* and *Goals 2000* stand firm in their disappointment of the nation's schools for well-stated reasons. They found poor showing in international competitions and economic growth grounds enough to term this an educational crisis. The documents stress the need for increased national attention to the issue of education encouraging more than educators to get involved. In the latter urging, *Goals 2000* goes beyond any of the authors in linking schools with child health, nutrition, parental education, and so on. This is clearly a reflection of late 1900s society and though the responsibility is enlarged, these are primarily structural linkages to other social agencies. What

neither *Goals 2000* nor *A Nation at Risk* does is make the connection between education and democracy as the symbolic, reciprocal, and sometimes indistinguishable process as had the authors.

Comparing the Four Authors with the Contemporary Policy Documents

The difference between the thesis of the four authors selected for this study on the one hand, and the two policy documents on the other is, at the very least, a difference in emphasis. The difference is sharp, perhaps too pronounced to be thought of as merely a difference in degree, but it is not unreasonable to assume that all six texts were seeking to explain citizenship and the role that education played in understanding that citizenship. The first body of research, that from the selected authors, dedicated a very large portion of their discussion to the relationship between democracy and education. It is a small stretch of the imagination to argue that they saw this relationship as central to the actualization of America, superimposing on our American context the seventeenth century philosophical position, particularly as embodied by John Locke and written into our founding documents, that humans have fundamental rights which are literally our birthright. These include freedom, respect, equality, as well as the "pursuit of happiness," the most tangible form of our God-given rights. But the honoring of these human values by other human beings and their institutions cannot be easily assumed. They must be built into structures that will perpetually reinforce them.

Democracy was the institutional structure of choice to support these values. This structure, emphasized time and again by the four authors in this

study, combined a delicate, changing individualism *and* simultaneously a collectivism, a seemingly paradoxical, dualistic emphasis on both individual liberty *and* republican civil virtue. But democracy does not develop on its own. As Barber put it so poignantly, "creating new generations of citizens is not a discretionary activity" (*An Aristocracy of Everyone*, 1992, p. 260). Democracy must be, like a seed, planted and nurtured. It must receive daily nutrition to ensure its growth; to bear fruits, it must receive even greater care. The best way to care for this growing democracy is assure a free public education for all.

More than simple dissemination of information, education instructs in the careful balance between the individual and those of the collective. It inculcates citizens in their rights and freedoms on the one hand, and their responsibilities on the other. The four authors also recognized that pursuit of happiness included an economic freedom. Each author included vocational education, broadly interpreted, as essential for both the individual and the collective society. The emphasis was not great, but it was clearly there.

The policy documents, however, took a different emphasis. Discussions of both democracy and economics were not absent in these documents, but the weight given to each was roughly inversely proportional to the weight given each by the selected authors; economics was far more central to the argument in the policy documents. And though there is little explicit reference to core values, the implicit assumption seemed to accept similar basic human values as those of the authors. But the means to achieve these values was through an unequivocal emphasis on economic competition and a vocationally skilled

workforce. This view seemed to hearken back to Adam Smith for whom, as was noted earlier in this study, these skills were central, and for whom education was absolutely essential to individual and collective well-being. The inherent abilities of the individual must be coaxed out and tuned up. They must receive continuous attention if they are to really produce wealth. The way to reach the material good, the argument seems to assume, is through education, because education will find those hidden talents and make them more useful. And as the context changes through time, and the economic needs of the community change, education will concurrently change.

The danger here is in looking at the words without considering their meaning in the larger context of the texts in which they occur. Citizenship, democracy, and economics are the commonalties. The difference lies in an inverse proportionality. If the authors overwhelmingly emphasized democracy and only touched economic concerns, the policy documents did the reverse. Perhaps, as has been noted in the prior discussion, this emphasis is simply a shift in the changing political and economic context of America. However, Barber, living in the same America as those who authored the two policy documents, still kept the democratic focus. Could it be argued that the emphasis from democracy to the economy that occurs between the authors and the policy documents, is really a shift in kind, a shift in fundamental values? In this interpretation, America is being challenged in the late twentieth century to decide whether economics supports a democratic way of life or the other way around.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this research was to contribute to the on-going dialogue regarding democracy and education. It sought to uncover the content of prior discussions taken from perspectives across the American continuum, specifically focusing on the relationship of democracy to education in our past and present democratic society. The interpretation of this relationship impacts all of society. But it was for those who write and interpret current educational policy that this dissertation was written. They are the Americans who greatly reinforce or reinvent the relationship between democracy and education and translate that into very specific educational practice. This contribution was made in hopes of impacting how these two groups consider their roles as leaders and their beliefs about democratic education.

This problem of the study was therefore to investigate what influential authors have said or implied regarding the relationship between democracy and education throughout American history. There are six texts in all representing two distinctly separate perspectives—one taken from educational and political philosophers—Thomas Jefferson, Horace Mann, John Dewey, and Benjamin Barber—the other consisting of two well known policy documents produced in the past decade or so—*A Nation at Risk* and *Goals 2000.*

The methodology employed was qualitative in design. Documentary analysis, or historical research, was done since the data were completely textual. This required successive steps in content analysis, data processing, categorization, and utilization of the constant comparative method. The selected authors were then compared and discussed. The policy documents were treated in a similar manner and then the authors were compared as a group to the sum of the policy documents.

The first body of research findings taken from the works of selected authors found the relationship between democracy and education to be reciprocal in nature. This reciprocity is reinforced and/or changed by the playing out of tensions between competing societal goods, such as the simultaneous need for individual rights and for civic responsibility, or for balancing the needs of the individual with those of the collective. Democracy requires choices which depend upon a citizenry who know how to make choices, that is, an educated citizenry. Given these reciprocal relationships, they therefore viewed public support of education an essential enabler of the state interest. It was important also, even if not emphasized by the authors that education develop skills for work. Neither an individual nor a nation could enjoy a democracy without a sound economic basis. Finally, the authors also advocated teaching the delicate nuances of the democratic process which turned out to be the same delicate nuances of the education process, and involved understanding and thriving on differences.

The selected government documents revealed similar essentials but with different emphases. They held the position that in our current societal context, education's relationship with democracy is secondary in emphasis to its relationship with economics. America's success in the world market and in many forms of international competition requires a concerted educational emphasis on economics and vocationalism. Though democracy was acknowledged as a component for the actualization of America, to the authors of these policy documents, this economic need takes precedence over the democratic need for education in today's schools.

Conclusions

1. Democracy and education are intellectual twins.

Though separate concepts and separate in application, democracy and education share an unavoidable process of making unending choices. Learning never ends; problems are at best temporarily resolved, never solved. This process goes beyond a mere reciprocal relationship. In each, and in sometimes indistinguishable instances, judgments must be made that involve tensions between competing goods. Therefore, schools must teach this process not only because that is the way of learning, but because that is what is required to be a good citizen.

2. Democracy and education together support American values.

The implicit and explicit argument goes like this. Our forefathers adopted and asserted a view of fundamental human rights. They then chose to institutionalize these values by establishing a democratic government. This

democratic structure was explicitly created to better ensure the practice and protection of these values. For Thomas Jefferson and the authors who followed him in this study, this meant a focus on public education. Education was the crucial enabler of democracy. When done well, education teaches a child how to become a good citizen. Public schools would ensure this education for all. Again, the implicit and explicit argument is that a democratic government can only assume its own survival by educating citizens to be both free and responsible and, due to this education, citizens exercise their freedom and responsibility in supporting the democratic government. The reciprocal relationship is unequivocal and in unending balance.

3. Democracy and economics are timeless partners, but the dance changes. The metaphor of the dance is purposeful in underscoring that the partnership has persisted but who leads is up for grabs. This partnership appears to be yet another variation on the theme of dueling tensions in American society. Over time the selected authors and contemporary documents demonstrated a belief that democracy and economics fall under the expectations of American citizenship, and all of these texts discussed the central place of education in both democracy and economics. Neither democratic nor economic development would come to fruition without education. The difference found between the two bodies of research, however, is in degree of emphasis on democratic or economic demands and what that means to citizenship—to John Locke and the authors reviewed in this study, it would mean social-political responsibility; to Adam Smith and the documents reviewed in this study, it

would mean being a productive worker for a productive economy. This understanding of citizenship therefore directly begets two very different notions of education as an investment in the individual—the difference between teaching the nuances of balanced judgments between competing social goods and teaching vocational skills. In the American arena, the centuries-old dance continues, but for the authors, democracy takes the lead; in the policy documents, the lead partner is clearly economics.

Implications

This section is a brief foray into the researcher's own interpretations and extensions of the texts which have been presented. These purposefully go beyond the cool logic of social science and return to the more passionate personal origins of the study.

Interpreting the relationship between democracy and education has several implications for schools and for American society. First, if democracy and education involve an intellectual process which requires judgments to justify the perpetual balancing of tensions between competing social goods, then focusing on this process is key; Jefferson, Mann, Dewey, and Barber would say that developing this ability means the difference between simply making decisions and making thoughtful decisions. As long as the state's interest is in further development of America's values which center on individual choice and responsibility, the public schools are crucial. This is where we learn the "right" mix of reflection and action, of celebrating Americanism and multiculturalism, of discussing truths and canons. Most of all we learn in school how to balance

individual needs with those of the collective, seeing just how one's decisions impact others around them. Mann would say that reminding us that no man lives in his own bubble would be a start. When all Americans understand the interrelated nature of our existence and the important role we play in each others' lives, then the true meaning of democracy (and education) will have been found.

Second, if democracy and education support American values, then Americans should make themselves more aware of how they express values. Currently the expression of American values, as per the two policy documents, comes in the way of graduating from high school and college, holding down a profitable job, and increasing productivity. Will these, unto themselves, maintain the value of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness in the American eye? I contend that it will not. A more direct, democratic approach is necessary to protect the valuation of these rights and to show citizens how to live up to that title.

Finally, if democracy and economics are timeless partners engaging in an eternally changing dance, then Americans should focus on what allowing economics to take the lead means to America today. *A Nation at Risk* sums up the situation well: "That we have compromised this commitment is, upon reflection, hardly surprising, given the multitude of often conflicting demands we have placed on our Nation's schools and colleges" (p. 6). We should therefore ask ourselves if democracy and economics are two of the conflicting demands

to which this document alludes? Are we sending mixed messages to our students and to society? Do we dilute our outcomes by diluting our purpose?

Americans must keep in mind that no longer do we educate only for today and only for the well-defined locale in which the child grows up. The limitations of this world are quickly reducing, thus the need and purposes of education are greatly increasing. The answer is not to eliminate economics from the educational purpose, it is to establishing an emphasis that Americans can justify. They must establish by what set of priorities they wish to live. And upon establishing such, decide if they can they live with the outcome. Once again, we must balance the tensions.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Further Research

Furthering research on the topic of democracy and education can take many different forms. One possibility is a replication of this study using any other combination of authors and sources. There are myriad possibilities in dozens of historical figures and documents and countless political and educational philosophies. Indeed, curriculum itself may even be considered a potential source and would lead to a more focused look at this relationship.

Another possibility would be to add a methodological twist to the current study, exchanging documentary or historical analysis for more of a case study approach. The study of human subjects would allow the researcher to gauge professional opinions/attitudes on the purposes of schooling and the relationship between democracy and education from the teacher's,

administrator's, student's, and/or parent's perspective. Even investigating the difference, if one exists, between the elementary and secondary education perspective would lead to useful findings for curriculum consideration.

Perhaps most importantly, an expansion on the results of this study—regarding the similarities between democratic and educational processes—would continue the dialogue regarding the process of balancing tensions. Determining what other social issues act as tensions would be one possibility. Looking at the steps involved in working through tensions and how teachers can best guide their students through that process would be another.

Regardless of the study's content, the goal remains reaching a better understanding of the nuances of democracy and what it should mean to American education.

Recommendations for Policy Makers and Policy Implementors

The creators of today's educational policies greatly influence the relationship between democracy and education. And the implementors of these very same policies have a direct impact on how democracy plays out in our nation's schools. In writing this document, I hope to challenge the way these two groups—policy creators and implementors—look at their roles as leaders and at their beliefs about democratic education. I encourage their greater reflection on these beliefs, refusing to accept democracy as a mere given in America. These two groups should join forces to create a new social awareness of the choices they make. One suggestion would be to create another investigative commission to center around the issue of democracy.

This commission could focus on the question, What does democracy mean, and how does education enable it? Its members could reflect upon the processes involved in both education and democracy—balancing tensions, noting how contextual, how fully participatory that act is.

No matter the route, policy makers and policy implementors should determine for themselves what that process entails and how that directly links to their job and the impact it has on the nation. Becoming more aware of their own decision making and their ability to discriminate between courses of action can only lead to increased learning for them. The hope then is that their increased learning and awareness will be reflected in their outputs. These outputs will therefore create a greater awareness in us all. If we truly believe Jefferson, Mann, Dewey, and Barber, this awareness can turn on a reflection about the meaning of the American way of life. It will take a renewed, serious and sustained interest in public education in its relationship to our cherished democracy to save the marriage so carefully nourished for two centuries.

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